

# **City of Los Angeles Study of the City Planning Department**

by

## **Zucker Systems**

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**July 1991**



needed for recently promoted employees; the decentralization of support functions to enable local work units to better control and be held accountable for timeliness and quality of their respective work products.

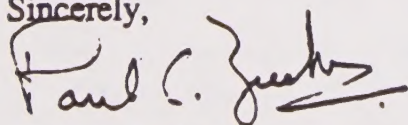
We recognize that these recommended organizational changes for both the Department and perhaps the general city government may be difficult to accept, particularly since many of them are predicated upon years of historical and statutory interpretation. However, given the labor-intensive nature of planning services, they are essential to the Department's ability to provide the needed technical and professional leadership for the City in this regard.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT** - The physical work environment is as important to the welfare of the organization as the physical environment is to the City's citizenry. Our review noted that the Department's physical work environment is deplorable and counter-productive to its efforts to achieve an efficient and effective service delivery system. In conjunction with the organizational changes discussed above, we are recommending a reorganization and remodeling of the Department's work space. Aside from the obvious benefits of improved communication, supervision and workflow from having like functions adjacent to one another, a remodel and reorganization will enhance customer services. Currently, the Department's clients are often routed to as many as three different floors and often to two different buildings in seeking answers to questions. We are recommending consolidation of counter services and the realignment of office assignments. In addition, we recommend the Department explore the creation of satellite offices as a means of enhancing customer services and service delivery systems. These initial offices should be established in the Valley due to the current workload and expanded to other regions of the city as management skills and resources permit.

The total costs to implement this report are estimated at \$23,979,600. These costs are off-set by a variety of savings estimated at \$14,441,000. The net cost to implement this report is roughly \$10 million over a 9-year period or \$1.1 million per year. We recommend the City consider the use of an override fee on permits and other sources of funds to implement the report.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the City Administrative Office, Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, the Chairman of the Planning Commission, and the Department's management for their assistance in this study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul C. Zucker", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul C. Zucker

PCZ:sp





July 25, 1991

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Honorable Mayor and City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
City Hall, Room 204  
200 Main Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Mayor and Members of Council:

In recent years, a significant commitment of financial and human resources have been channelled to the City's Planning Department with the hope of planning and building a better tomorrow. In June 1990, the Mayor and City Council requested outside consulting assistance in determining whether these resources are being used efficiently and effectively and that the Planning Department has the best possible organization structure, planning and technical resources to meet the complex planning issues and demands of future decades.

We have completed our review and have summarized our findings and recommendations in the attached Executive Summary and full report. Our examination was an extensive effort that extended over a six-month period and involved virtually every individual and function within the Department.

Los Angeles is considered one of the premier cities of the world. Its unique geographic location and physical characteristics, and cultural diversity are important attributes that must be recognized and protected as the City evolves into the twenty-first century. Overall, our study noted the Department is composed of a highly educated, and dedicated group of professionals. However, a number of significant issues exist within both the City and the Department regarding its planning capabilities and its ability to influence its destiny. The depth and breadth of these issues is overwhelming and must be addressed in a forthright, collective manner with elected officials and professional staff, residents and business leaders. These issues include:

**POLITICAL/PLANNING ENVIRONMENT** - The current structure of Los Angeles City Government results in a diffusion of decision-making authority between the Mayor, City Council, various Boards and Commissions, and with it, any accompanying accountability. Planning, more than any other municipal service, is a consensus building process that is predicated upon achievement of a commonly held vision and a clear statement of supporting goals and objectives.

Our review noted that the City's General Plan, which is the chief planning document that reflects that vision, is no longer an effective management tool and is in need of major revisions. The existence of an outdated and ineffective General Plan is symbolic of the current status of planning within the City. Residents are demanding,

planning  
environment  
development  
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through their elected Council members, more and better controls to protect what they perceive to be an erosion in the quality of life. Council and staff are responding to those pressures with a variety of instruments, including Interim Control Ordinances, Specific Plans and a myriad of other incremental approaches which now constitute the majority of the Department's workload.

The proposed Balanced Growth Plan (Growth Management Plan) is a step in the right direction toward the restoration of a forward thinking approach to planning, a new beginning to redefine and restore planning as a vital process in the City's affairs. We are highly supportive of this effort but recommend a number of changes to strengthen the approach. As part of this effort we also recommend that all city-wide elements of the General Plan be completed within two years and all Community Plans be updated within nine years. Improved planning will necessitate greater and specific leadership on the part of the Mayor and City Council and Planning Commission in the articulation of a vision and the development of supporting plans and policies while simultaneously refraining from micro-managing the day-to-day operations of the Planning Department.

**ORGANIZATIONAL/PERSONNEL ENVIRONMENT** - Approximately 80% of the Department's resources are allocated to personnel and over 50% of the Department's employees possess Master Degrees in their respective fields. It is a fair characterization to say that City Planning epitomizes the white collar organization that requires a high degree of technical training and proficiency. Our review noted that, like many white collar organizations throughout America, the Planning Department's internal organizations and operations have not kept pace with the technological advancements and changes in the work force and work environment.

Our review noted that the current classification, compensation, organization and structure of the staff impedes the maximum utilization of employees' skills and their own self-actualization. Employee morale and productivity is at a dangerously low level. It is important to note that this dilemma is the result of a number of different factors at play over a number of years. We are recommending that the Department address these issues in a systematic fashion and at all levels throughout the organization. The first area of concern is the recruiting of a new Planning Director. We have suggested specific criteria for this effort. Other areas include expanding the role and responsibilities of the Associate Zoning Administrators, the most senior and experienced level of professionals within the Department, to provide leadership and training capabilities to the organization and specifically the first-line supervisors; consolidate classifications, expand spans of control for management personnel throughout the Department; delegate decision-making authority and accountability to lower levels throughout the organization; equip professional staff with computers to enable them to provide text processing as well as provide administrative and technical chores at their respective work stations; the design and implementation of an aggressive training program to support both the attainment of technical competency and managerial and supervisory skills that are de-



needed for recently promoted employees; the decentralization of support functions to enable local work units to better control and be held accountable for the timeliness and quality of their respective work products.

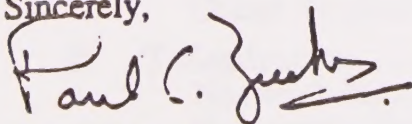
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Paul C. Zucker  
PCZ:sp







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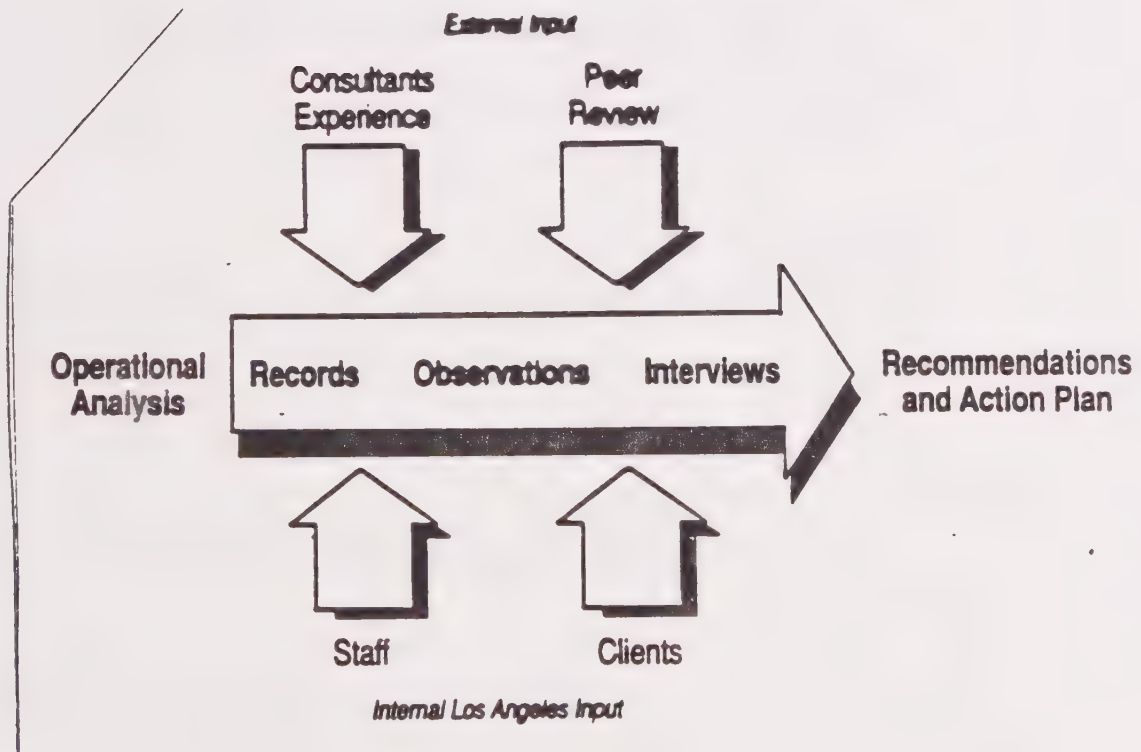


## I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

### A. SCOPE AND APPROACH

This study of the Los Angeles Planning Department was conducted between January and June, 1991. The prime consultant was Zucker Systems of San Diego. Subconsultants were Arroyo Seco Associates, Inc. of Pasadena, and Cordoba Corporation of Los Angeles. The consultants used an interactive process as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**Methodology Overview**  
**Study of Los Angeles Planning Department**



Specific consulting activities included:

- ✓ **Group meetings** were held with virtually all employees in the department. See Appendix C for issues identified by employees.
- ✓ **Questionnaires** were completed by most employees in the department. See Appendix A & B for questionnaires.
- ✓ **External interviews** were conducted with 45 individuals outside the planning department. See Appendix E for issues identified in these interviews.
- ✓ **A management retreat** was held with planning department managers. See Appendix D for issues identified in the retreat.



- ✓ **A peer review** was conducted by six of the country's leading planning directors who visited Los Angeles for 3 days. See Appendix F for comments by the peer panel. The peer panel summary is also available on video tape and may be borrowed for viewing from the Planning Department.
- ✓ **An operational analysis** was conducted based on a review of records, observing functions in action and interviewing staff. In many instances new records were constructed due to the lack of adequate data for analysis. This data is found throughout this report.

We particularly want to thank the planning department staff for their assistance in this task. Numerous requests for information or meetings were accommodated within a busy work schedule.

It is always difficult as a consultant to feel that you have an adequate understanding of an organization while spending so little time in a community. Nevertheless, "external eyes" can provide insight that is often overlooked in the day to day press of activities. We offer our comments in a constructive perspective. We believe our recommendations can reinvigorate the city's planning program.

## **B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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### **Approach and Overall Findings**

In recent years, a significant commitment of financial and human resources have been channelled to the City's Planning Department with the hope of planning and building a better tomorrow. In June 1990, the Mayor and City Council requested outside consulting assistance in determining whether these resources are being used efficiently and effectively and that the Planning Department has the best possible organization structure, planning, and technical resources to meet the complex planning issues and demands of future decades.

This study of the Planning Department was conducted between January and June, 1991. The prime consultant was Zucker Systems of San Diego. Subconsultants were Arroyo Seco Associates, Inc., of Pasadena, and Cordoba Corporation of Los Angeles. Study methodology included group meetings with virtually all of the staff, completion of external questionnaires by staff, a retreat with department management, external interviews, a peer review conducted by six of the county's leading planning directors, and an operational analysis.

A study of this type focuses on areas for improvement and therefore may not adequately point out the positive things in the city's planning program. We found many good and exemplary things in our review. By and large, we believe staff, properly managed and trained, is both capable and dedicated. Although employee morale and productivity is at a dangerously low level, we saw many sparks of potential and renewed enthusiasm during the course of the study.



A number of projects are most impressive, such as the implementation of AB283, and the method of funding the proposed balanced growth plan. Additionally, the city has had in place for years a number of progressive procedures concerning Zoning Administration, hearing examiners and hearing officers. Many of the permit processes are completing permits in less time than in many other communities throughout California.

However, citizens are demanding more and more attention to be paid to quality of life issues and thus better planning for those related items. With increasing frequency, Los Angeles' citizens are feeling compelled to utilize the courts and/or the initiative process to ensure desired outcomes and require better planning. The passage of AB283 and Proposition U and the court's enforcement of the California Environmental Quality Act requiring site plan and environmental review for large projects are just a few of the most current examples. In this regard, we believe Los Angeles is at a pivotal junction in its evolutionary cycle as a premier city.

Planning in Los Angeles is at a crisis level. The city needs to overcome more than a decade of inadequate attention to planning issues.

The City's General Plan, which is the chief planning document to reflect the city's vision is and no longer an effective management tool. Council and staff are increasingly forced to respond to citizen pressures with a variety of instruments including Interim Control Ordinance, Specific Plans and a myriad of other incremental approaches. In many respects the planning department is a permitting department rather than a planning department.

There are numerous personnel and organizational issues within the Planning Department. Approximately 80% of the Department's resources are allocated to personnel and over 50% of the Department's employees possess Master Degrees in their respective fields. It is a fair characterization to say that City Planning epitomizes the white collar organization that requires a high degree of technical training and proficiency. In that regard our review noted that, like many white collar organizations throughout America, the Planning Department's internal organizations and operations have not kept pace with the technological advancements and changes in the work force and work environment. The current classification, compensation, training, organization and structure of the staff impedes the maximum utilization of employees' skills and their own self-actualization. It is important to note that this dilemma is the result of a number of different factors at play over a number of years. We are recommending that the Department address these issues in a systematic fashion and at all levels throughout the organization.

The Department is substantially out of date from a technological perspective. Telephone systems are inadequate and out-of-date. There is a substantial lack of computer equipment and an even greater lack of effective computer operations and programming.

Finally the Department's physical work environment is deplorable and counter-productive to its efforts to achieve an efficient and effective service delivery system.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

Our report outlines 267 specific recommendations as shown in Table 1. Key findings and recommendations include:

### **1. General Plan**

The General Plan is no longer an effective management tool and is in need of major revisions. We proposed updating the city-wide elements within two years at a cost of 9.2 million dollars, (Rec. 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, and 108). Community plans would be updated over a seven-year period at a cost of \$25.6 million dollars, (Rec. 116, 117, 118, 119, and 120).

### **2. Management**

We generally found a weak management structure throughout the department. Problems include lack of clarity regarding purpose of the department and expectations of staff. Generally, we found an over-politicized department focused on satisfying the Mayor and City Council rather than providing professional recommendations. There is no pro-active work program or clear setting of priorities within the department. There is a lack of 'can-do' attitude.

We propose:

- ✓ Setting specific criteria for the appointment of a new planning director (Rec. 2).
- ✓ Setting of a clear work program with priorities (Rec. 4, 6, and 19).
- ✓ Establishing higher professional standards (Rec. 5 and 8).
- ✓ A management training program (Rec. 42).

### **3. Staffing and Organization**

Staffing and organizational pattern have not kept pace with modern technology, changes in work force, changes in work environment, or modern management approaches.

We propose:

- ✓ Increasing spans of control (Rec. 76).
- ✓ Greater reliance of Associate Zoning Administrator's skills and experience through expanded roles and responsibilities (Rec. 198, 206, 207, and 212).
- ✓ Consolidated employee classifications (Rec 74, 75).
- ✓ Creation of effective training programs throughout the Department (Rec. 81 to 85).



#### **4. Technology**

The department is substantially out-of-date in relation to technology. It is operating with a poor telephone system, a major lack of computers, and a lack of adequate computer systems and programs. The department currently has one PC computer per every 9.5 staff members. A more reasonable ratio would be one for every 1 to 2 staff members. A major investment in additional computers is essential. Additionally, there is a need for major new computer applications and software. To correct this problem is a multi-million dollar task that we believe is beyond the capacity of the planning department to handle alone. Instead, we recommend increased inter-department cooperation on systems.

We propose:

- ✓ The Department should abandon its attempt to create a parcel based GIS system and instead join forces with the Bureau of Engineering (Rec. 264 and 265).
- ✓ Rather than create its own permit processing systems, the Department should join forces with the Building Department (Rec. 71).
- ✓ The acquisition of \$3,555,000 of new computer equipment and software (Rec 60, 63, 64, 71, 93, 128, and 140).
- ✓ Substantial upgrades to the department's telephone system (Rec 49 to 58).
- ✓ Joining with the Bureau of Engineering on a variety of mapping systems (Rec. 244).

#### **5. Transportation Planning**

The importance of transportation planning for the city of Los Angeles is a given. However, the planning department has not been a major player in this arena.

We propose:

- ✓ The Department should formalize its relations on transportation planning (Rec. 113).
- ✓ The possible use of tax increment financing for projects surrounding transit stations (Rec. 114).
- ✓ Development of transportation models separately from the Community Planning Program (Rec. 109, 110, and 111).

#### **6. Environmental Impact Reports**

The city is taking 2-3 years to process an environmental impact report and staff is processing only one environmental impact report per staff per year. The city's entire environmental function lacks the stature and expertise found in most major cities. The environmental process is severely hampered by lack of an adequate general plan and supporting data and research models.

We propose:

- ✓ Immediately transferring staff and hiring consultants to clear the departments current backlog within six months (Rec. 181 and 183).
- ✓ A variety of actions to permanently establish a credible environmental function (Rec. 182, 184 to 197).

## **7. Social/Economic Issues**

In many respects the Department's work program looks more like what we would expect in a suburban community rather than the nation's second largest diverse city.

We propose:

- ✓ The department begin a modest effort to reshape itself and its work programs to address social/economic issues (Rec. 127, 128, and 129).

## **8. Subdivisions and Parcel Maps**

The city is taking 178 days to process subdivision and 229 days to process parcel maps when state statutes require a 50 day process.

We propose:

- ✓ A series of recommendations to reduce these times to 120 days for subdivisions and 90 days for parcel maps (Rec. 136 to 155).

## **9. Office Space**

The Department's physical work environment is deplorable and counter-productive to its efforts to achieve an efficient and effective service delivery system.

We propose:

- ✓ A complete reorganization and remodeling of the Department's work space at a cost of 2 million dollars (Rec. 95, 157, and 214).

## **10. Decentralization**

Los Angeles is too large a city to make all planning decisions downtown. In the long run, we believe the city should look at a variety of decentralized patterns. Due to the weak management structure overall, decentralization is not recommended at this time.

We propose:

- ✓ Experimentation with decentralization by adding additional functions to the Valley Office (Rec. 45 and 46).

## **11. City Attorney**

There is a major slow down in enacting planning policy due to the slow response time from the City Attorney's office. For example, on



the average, ordinances are delayed 13 months waiting for City Attorney action.

We propose:

- ✓ Several attorneys should be permanently assigned to planning (Rec. 12).
- ✓ A variety of other actions to speed up the process (Rec. 13 to 17).

## **12. Implementation and Funding**

The total costs to implement this report are estimated at \$23,979,600. These costs are offset by a variety of savings estimated at \$14,441,000. The net cost to implement the report is roughly \$10 million over a 9-year period or \$1.1 million per year.

We propose:

- ✓ The Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission and Planning Department should review this report and agree on an implementation plan (Rec. 1)
- ✓ A consultant should be hired to help implement the report (Rec. 1)
- ✓ Consideration be given to use of a \$1-2 million dollar per year override on permits as well as other sources of funding.

**TABLE 1**  
**Implementation and Action Plan Summary**

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	IMPORTANCE OF RECOMMENDATION #1 Being Most Important	
			Priority	Page No.
<b>POLICY ISSUES</b>				
1. Implementation plan for the study recommendations.	Planning Director with Mayor, Council and Planning Commission	Renewal of the Planning Department, 1-year consulting costs \$100,000.	1	33
2. Require political and leadership skills for new Planning Director.	Mayor	Renewal of the Planning Department.	1	37
3. Clarify goals and objectives for planning program.	Mayor	Focus resources on the city's highest priorities.	1	37
4. Develop system for setting work program priorities.	City Council	Focus resources on the city's highest priorities. Improve efficiency of Planning Department.	1	39
5. Encourage planning rather than political recommendations.	City Council	Improve the quality of Council decisions.	2	39
6. Conduct fiscal impact analysis prior to adopting new regulations or policy.	City Council	Creates reality in a time of limited resources.	1	39
7. Planning and Land Use Management Committee (PLUM) to report Planning Commission recommendations to City Council.	PLUM	Improve the quality of Council decisions.	3	39
8. PLUM to encourage professional planning recommendations from Planning Department.	PLUM	Improve the quality of PLUM decisions.	2	40
9. Planning Commission to emphasize city-wide policy making role.	Planning Commission	Assist to solve city-wide problems.	2	41



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
10. Planning Commission to emphasize user friendly meetings.	Planning Commission	Better service to the public, strengthen public support for good planning, + \$300.	2	41
11. Determine appropriate staffing levels for Planning Commission meetings.	Planning Director	Allocate staff resources to other needed work program areas, - \$5,000.	2	42
12. Permanently assign attorneys to Planning Department.	City Attorney	Speed up the ordinance writing thereby simplifying process or partially impacting the community.	1	43
13. Planning Department to reduce the number of requests for City Attorney advice.	Planning Director	Allocate resources to more important projects.	2	43
14. Develop a training program for planners regarding legal issues.	City Attorney	More efficiency in the process - less cost and litigation.	2	
15. Designate quality ordinance writers within Planning Department	Planning Director/City Attorney	Speed up ordinance writing process and reduce costs.	2	44
16. Target 3 months turnaround time for legal review of ordinances.	City Attorney	Speed up ordinance writing and thereby positively impact the community.	1	44
17. Planning Department to hire their own attorney.	Planning Director	A fall back position to recommendations 12 through 17.	2	44
18. <b>MENT ISSUES</b> Planning Department to develop a clear Mission Statement.	Planning Director	Increased effectiveness and efficiency of Department.	1	50
19. Develop a formalized Planning Department work program.	Planning Director with Planning Commission and City Council	Increased effectiveness and efficiency of Department. Ability to measure progress on accomplishments.	1	52
20. Develop a planning constituency plan.	Planning Director	Support for strong planning program resulting in improved city.	2	53
21. Change Planning Department's internal newsletter.	Planning Director	Increased communication should lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness.	3	54

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
22. Continue publishing external newsletter quarterly.	Planning Director	Better communications should help citizens plan their communities.	2	56
23. Develop lists of all projects and assignments in the Planning Department.	Planning Director	Increased communications will lead to increased efficiency, better public service.	2	57
24. Assign Planning Department manager to all planning related city departments.	Planning Director	Better implementation of plans through ties between planners and implementors.	2	57
25. Develop orientation program for new planners.	Planning Deputy for Administration	Increased efficiency and effectiveness through training and awareness.	3	57
26. Planning Department to use check-out boards in all units.	Principle Planners	Reduce clerical time in locating planners, + \$300.	3	57
27. Adopt policy that all phone calls must be returned prior to the end of the day.	Planning Director	Better client services.	2	57
28. Elicit Planning Department client comments.	Planning Director and all Department Managers	Better client services, develop ideas for efficiency and effectiveness.	3	58
29. Establish quarterly meetings with industry groups.	Deputy Director for Development	Better client services, develop ideas for efficiency and effectiveness.	2	58
30. Planning manager to spend more time with employees.	Planning Director and all Department Managers	Improved communication and motivation of employees should increase efficiency and effectiveness.	2	58
31. Prepare booklet describing planning functions and programs.	Deputy for Administration	Improved knowledge of staff leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness.	3	58
32. Planning manager to review average responses from employee questionnaires	All Department Managers	Increased attention to employee concerns can lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness.	2	62
33. Revise City Hall directories regarding planning.	Deputy for Administration	Better public service.	2	64



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
34. Place identification signs in City Hall lobbies.	Deputy for Administration	Better public service.	2	65
35. Remove junk and storage in City Hall corridors.	Deputy for Administration	Improve public image, create better working atmosphere.	2	65
36. Increase lighting intensity in hallways used by public.	General Service Department	Improve public image, create better working atmosphere.	3	65
37. Paint hallways and add attractive displays.	General Services and Deputy for Administration	Improve public image, create better working atmosphere, + \$5,000.	2	65
38. Modify entrances to departments, doorways and frosted glass.	General Services and Deputy for Administration	Improve public image, create better working atmosphere, + \$5,000.	2	65
39. Develop managers with "can do attitudes".	Planning Director	Improve efficiency and effectiveness of department.	1	67
40. Set deadlines for projects throughout the department.	All Department Supervisors and Managers	Shorten timelines and increase efficiency and productivity.	1	67
41. Planning Department to emphasize professional planning rather than political opinions.	Planning Director	Improve the quality of Mayor and Council decision-making.	2	67
42. Develop planning manager training program.	Planning Director	Improve efficiency and effectiveness of managers, + \$100,000.	1	68
43. <b>ORGANIZATION ISSUES</b> Planning Director to set upper level organizational pattern for department.	Planning Director	Development of effective and efficient management team. Allow Planning Director to spend time on the most important activities.	2	71
44. Utilize work teams for special projects.	Planning Director	Faster and more efficient completion of important projects.	2	71
45. Look at city-wide patterns of decentralization.	Mayor and City Council	Improved governmental service.	2	73

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
46. Experiment with planning department decentralization, starting with the Valley office.	Planning Director	Improved governmental service.	2	73
47. Set division size by functions, responsibilities and complexity rather than number of people in division.	Planning Director	Greater efficiency in organization.	3	74
48. Look at department's organizational pattern following adopting of work program.	Planning Director	Greater efficiency in organization.	3	74
<b>TELEPHONES</b> 49. Establish a Department policy and procedure for managing, administering and coordinating the Department's overall telecommunication system.	Deputy for Administration	Improved phone system will result in improved efficiency and effectiveness.	1	76
50. Request Pacific Telephone to conduct a busy study.	Deputy for Administration	Better customer service.	2	76
51. Establish grade of service parameters	Deputy for Administration	Better customer service.	2	77
52. Increase number of incoming telephone lines where highest volume of incoming calls is identified by the busy study.	Deputy for Administration	Better customer service.	1	78
53. Install a Departmental voice processing system.	Deputy for Administration	Better customer service. Improve staff efficiency.	2	78
54. Have the Department use call sequencers and answering machines.	Deputy for Administration	Better customer service. Improve staff efficiency.	2	81
55. Staff training in telephone use should be conducted throughout the Department.	Deputy for Administration	Better customer service. Improve staff efficiency.	2	82
56. All clerical positions should be filled to provide for the full complement of authorized staff.	Deputy for Administration	Better utilization of staff, increased efficiency.	2	83



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
57. Program the call sequencer to collect management information.	Deputy for Administration	Better customer service.	2	83
58. Re-evaluate the numbering system allocated to the Public Counter Room 460S. Conduct a study to determine how many calls are actually misdirected to Public Counter Room 460S.	General Services and Deputy for Administration	Increased customer service, free staff time.	2	83
<b>COMPUTER AUTOMATION</b> 59. Provide immediate resources from within Systems & Mapping Division to install and provide an on schedule operational IBM AS/400 environment.	Deputy for Administration	Improved staff efficiency.	1	85
60. Replace the IBM System 36 with the most feasible and cost effective office automation solution.	Deputy for Administration	Improved staff efficiency.	1	86
61. The Department should pursue the development of a Joint Data Program with the BOE which would provide an inter-departmental coordination process of automated systems.	Deputy for Administration	Improved staff efficiency, city-wide cost savings.	1	87
62. Immediately prepare a Systems Strategy that thoroughly analyzes the Department's needs requirements for PCs, terminals, and printers.	Deputy for Administration	Improved staff efficiency, consultant cost \$25,000.	1	88
63. The Department should resubmit the requisition order for an additional 40+ IBM PS/2 PCs.	Deputy for Administration	Improved staff efficiency.	1	88
64. Utilize personal PCs by providing modems at the homes of selected individual employees	Deputy for Administration	Improved staff efficiency.	3	88
65. Provide adequate resources to make SEIS rational.	Deputy for Administration	Better information for decision-making, improved effectiveness.	2	89

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
66. Prepare a comprehensive computer training program.	Deputy for Administration	Improved staff efficiency, + \$80,000.	2	90
67. Re-evaluate the management and contracting group to ensure that one management employee or senior analyst from the Systems & Mapping Division becomes an active participant.	Deputy for Administration	Improved effectiveness of contracts.	3	91
68. A long term solution for improving data retrieval is for the acquisition of more hardware by the city's ISD or the Department.	Deputy for Administration	Better service to clients, more efficient staff work.	2	94
69. The "general comments" area of the case record should be expanded to allow for increased textual output.	Deputy for Administration	Increase staff efficiency, reduce errors.	2	96
70. The Department should designate a unit within the Department to be responsible for the functioning of the ACTS system.	Planning Director	Increase staff efficiency, reduce errors.	2	96
71. Immediately open discussions with the Building and Safety Department to gain a complete understanding of the proposed PCIS of elements that would benefit the Department.	Planning Director	Better service to clients, long term improvements to staff efficiency. Early estimated cost is \$3 million.	1	99
72. Create a Coordinating & Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the Planning Department, BOE, Building & Safety Department, and ISD.	Planning Director	City-wide cost savings for computer functions.	1	101
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES</b> 73. Utilize employee exit interview results.	Deputy Director Administration	Improved morale.	3	107
74. Consolidate City Planning Associate and Planning Assistant into City Planning Assistant pay grade.	Deputy Director Administration/Personnel Officer	Greater flexibility in assignments.	1	110



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
75. Consolidate Senior City Planner and Associate Zoning Administrator classification in Chief City Planner	Deputy Director/Personnel Officer	Enhancement of employee productivity and assignment of staff.	1	110
76. Enlarge span of control for all management positions.	Director	Reduce layers and number of managers.	3	110
77. Select a specific flexible schedule 9/80 for all employees and maintain extended hours.	Director	Improved staffing capabilities.	1	112
78. Maintain staggered hours.	Director	Improved staffing capabilities.	3	112
79. All recruitments should be open and promotional.	Assistant Director Administration/Personnel Officer	Improved competition and talent pool	2	113
80. Require Executive staff to become involved in recruitment.	Director	Improved competition and talent pool	2	114
81. Design annual training program, including minimum hours for each employee.	Director/Assistant Director	Improve staff capabilities.	1	117
82. Develop training program in cooperation with city's Personnel Department.	Director/Assistant Director Personnel Department	Improve staff capabilities.	2	117
83. Department should continue to have professional seminars and discussions for staff.	Deputy Director	More effective staff.	3	117
84. Department should develop policies and procedures manuals.	Deputy Director/Director of Management Services	Improved staff productivity.	2	117
85. Update the Department's Administrative Manual.	Deputy Director/Director of Management Services	Improved staff productivity.	2	118
86. Re-implement the staff rotation program.	Director	Improved staff capabilities.	2	118

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
87. Consolidate the User Fees and Charges categories for the Department's services including the implementation of cost accounting systems that includes all other City services required as part of Department services.	Director of Management Services.	Consultant fees \$125,000, additional revenue.	2	121
88. City Council should adopt a cost recovery policy for the Planning Department.	Director	Clear direction on fees.	2	122
89. Conduct in-depth analysis of user fees and charges	Deputy for Administration	Possible new fees.	2	122
90. Implement a Work Order time reporting system for all employees.	Deputy Director/Director of Management Services	See Recommendation #94.	1	122
91. Establish the development activities as an Enterprise Fund.	Director of Management Services/Deputy Director	Better service to public, appropriate cost/benefit	2	122
92. Decentralize the Central Word Processing function.	Director	Improved service and efficiency.	2	124
93. Expand and modernize the Graphics Center.	Director of Graphic Service	\$50,000 capital investment.	2	125
94. Equip photo lab.	Director of Graphic Service	\$30,000 capital investment.	2	125
95. Reorganize and remodel the Department's office space.	Deputy Director Administration	\$2,000,000/Contractor costs/Improved working environment.	1	126
96. Reorganize the Department's budget policies and procedures.	Director	Improve cost accounting and responsibility of allocated resources.	2	128
97. Revise the personnel contract policy and procedures.	Deputy Director Administration Services/Management Services	Streamline contracting process.	2	129



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
98. Reorganize the Administrative Services Division.	Director/Deputy Director Administration Services	Broader span of control for management and consolidation of overlapping areas of responsibility.	2	131
99. Implement a Customer Service Program	Deputy Director Administration Services	Improve working relationship with line Departments.	2	131
<b>CITYWIDE DIVISION</b> 100. Submit 15 Guiding Principles to Planning Commission, Mayor and City Council.	Planning Director, Planning Commission, Mayor and City Council	Short term effectiveness for planning decision.	2	145
101. Complete Housing Element.	Principle Planner - City-Wide	Increase housing funds.	1	150
102. Update city-wide General Plan elements in two years.	Deputy for Planning	Required by law, cost.	1	150
103. Review sources for funding General Plan update.	Planning Director	Need to expand department resource.	1	152
104. Adhere to finalized schedule for updating plan.	Planning Director	A variety of city programs could be in jeopardy if plan is not updated.	1	152
105. Use project teams for General Plan.	Principle Planner in City-Wide	Greater staff efficiency.	2	152
106. Write general plan elements from regional city-wide perspective.	Principle Planner in City-Wide	Lower cost of plan, increase effectiveness.	1	152
107. Work with other city departments to complete general plan.	Principle Planner in City-Wide	Lower cost of plan, increase effectiveness.	1	153
108. Revise Balanced Growth Plan program.	Planning Director	Increase effectiveness and greater probability of success.	1	154
109. Develop transportation models.	Principle Planner - City-Wide	Earlier usability of models. More effective planning, + \$1.6 million.	1	154

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
110. Use transportation models for developers plan preparation.	Planning Director	Recover costs of models, improve quality of analysis.	2	156
111. Develop trip demand reduction programs.	Principle Planner - City-Wide	Improve Los Angeles transportation systems.	2	157
112. Clarify roles between planning and redevelopment.	Planning Director - City Council	Improved efficiency.	3	157
113. Formalize interrelationship between transportation planning and land use.	Planning Director	Better transportation planning.	3	158
114. Examine possibility of using tax increment funds to finance plans surrounding transit stations.	Principle Planner - City-Wide	Increased funds for needed planning. Long term financial gains to city.	1	158
115. Planning to develop its own links to transportation funding.	Planning Director	Increased funds for transportation planning.	1	159
116. Complete only community plans underway - hold others until city-wide plan is completed.	Principle Planner - City-Wide	Plans will easier to do and be more effective once city-wide policy is in place.	2	161
117. Complete review of all 35 community plans over 7 years.	Deputy Director - Long Range Planning	State statute requires general plan update. Cost estimated at \$_____	1	161
118. Review approach used to complete general plans.	Principle Planner - City Wide	Attempt to reduce costs per plan.	2	164
119. Finalize format for General Plan.	Deputy Director - Long Range Planning	Reduce costs, increase staff efficiency.	1	165
120. Streamline the General Plan.	Principle Planner - City-Wide	Reduce costs, make documents easier to use.	2	165
121. Restructure and revitalize GPAB.	Planning Director	Improve efficiency of inter-department planning.	2	168
122. Re-focus General Plan Advisory Board to original mission.	Planning Director	Improve efficiency of inter-department planning.	2	168



<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Cost/Benefit</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
123. Make attendance at GPAB meetings mandatory.	Planning Director	Improve efficiency of inter-department planning.	3	169
124. Revise GPAB agenda.	Planning Director	Improve efficiency of inter-department planning.	3	170
125. Clarify roles between planning and the Department of Environmental Affairs.	Planning Director	Improved efficiency, lower city costs.	3	170
126. Amend Ordinance 165009 regarding Department of Environmental Affairs.	City Council	Improved efficiency, lower city costs.	3	170
127. Planning should strengthen its research functions.	Deputy Director - Long Range Planning	More effective plans.	2	172
128. Identify needs for analytical tools.	Deputy Director - Long Range Planning	More effective plans.	2	172
129. Give increased attention to social/economic issues.	Deputy Director - Long Range Planning	More effective plans.	1	173
130. Proactively develop work program for code studies	Deputy Director for Development	Better implementation of policy.	2	175
131. Reassign code studies to Administration Division.	Planning Director	Better ties to current problem areas.	2	175
132. Citizen advisory committees for all community planning areas.	Principle Planner - City-Wide Planning	Improved citizen participation.	2	175
133. Timelines to be respected by citizen committees.	Citizen Committees	Speed up process - reduce costs.	1	175
134. Citizen committee to be focus for all planning action in the community.	Citizen Committee, City Council	Reduce confusion, improve coordination.	2	176
135. Develop an education process for citizen committee	Principle Planner - City-Wide	Improve policy making, increase efficiency of citizen review.	2	176

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
<b>DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT</b>				
136. Establish a standard turnaround time of 120 days for receiving and approving parcel map and subdivision applications.	Deputy Director Development/Project Planner	Improved service level to clients.	2	185
137. Establish a policy of not accepting incomplete applications.	AZA	Assist in meeting 120 day processing time discussed above.	1	185
138. Establish a "land development counseling team" in conjunction with other City Departments. Provide service under a consultancy fee and on an appointment basis.	AZA/Senior City Planner	Enhance service level to clients with additional revenue.	2	185
139. Redesign and consolidate parcel map and subdivision forms.	AZA/Senior City Planner	Improved direction and supervision for case processing activities.	2	185
140. Examine feasibility of an automated forms production system tied in to the computerized case tracking system.	Director of Information Systems/AZA	Reduce paperwork and work simplification for case processing, cost + \$5,000.	2	185
141. Streamline processing of parcel map and subdivision applications. Reduce time file sits idle. Set time limit of 40 days on comments and recommendations from other City Departments.	Director/Division Head/AZA	Enhance service level to clients.	1	186
142. When backlog of cases is completed, reassign one subdivision unit.	Division Head	Cost reallocation, - \$200,000.	2	187
143. Set 90% of available time as production standard.	Division Head	Cost savings.	2	190
144. Conduct parcel map hearings only when published decision challenged	AZA	Reduced staff time.	2	190
145. Develop management estimates for time required in all activities.	Division Head	Better management, reduced costs.	2	190



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
146. Consolidate Parcel Map and Subdivision sections into one section under direction of AZA.	Division Head	See comments under #147.	2	191
147. City Planner should assure greater supervising responsibility.	Division Head	Improved staff efficiency.	2	191
148. Assign each case file to a Planning Assistant to monitor status of case and completeness of file.	Division Head/AZA	Streamline current process.	2	191
149. Consolidate the public counters in Room 655 and assign staff, full-time, on a rotation basis.	Division Head	Improve employee productivity; better space utilization.	1	192
150. Assign Senior City Planner to supervise single public counter operations.	Division Head	Improved management.	2	192
151. Require AZA to hold hearings twice-a-week and meet a yardstick of 30 hearings per week.	Division Head/AZA	Improve case processing time.	2	193
152. AZA should review comments from other Departments prior to hearings and, where possible, establish a consent calendar.	AZA	Improve time for case processing.	2	193
153. Revise Bureau of Engineering staff allocation to better match workload.	Director	Improved time for case processing.	1	195
154. Establish system of user fees and charges to cover staff costs to Bureau of Engineering for review of division of land cases.	Director	Improved staff resources to match workload.	2	195
155. Bureau of Engineering to establish standards for processing cases.	Director	Improve productivity.	1	195

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
156. Assign Senior City Planner to manage and lead Urban Design section, including the Design Review Board unit (reassigned from Neighborhoods) and Landscape section.	Director/Division Head	Improved management.	2	196
157. Remodel staff workstations and create single public counter space in Room 665.	Director	Improved office space.	1	197
158. Reorganize all clerical staff in Division to serve as clerical pool.	Director/Division Head	Improved employee productivity.	2	197
159. Provide networked terminals to professional staff, who would then be required to directly input case related text materials.	Director/Division Head	\$70,000 capital purchase/improved employee productivity.	2	197
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING</b> 160. Adopt a pro-active approach to Neighborhood planning by developing an action agenda.	Principle Planner	Better public service.	2	202
161. Establish target of 12 months for completion of specific plans.	Principle Planner	Better public service/cost savings.	2	203
162. Develop a more uniform format for ICO's.	Principle Planner	Better public service/cost savings.	2	203
163. Explore other options than specific plans to achieve similar goals.	Deputy for Development	More efficient and effective regulation.	2	203
164. Determine Division priorities and target geographic areas for development and revitalization.	Principle Planner	Better public service.	2	206
165. Develop specific functional and structural guidelines for the Design Review Board including criteria for membership, staff resources available to the Board, and the process for design review.	Deputy for Development	Improved efficiency.	2	208



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
166. Review the function of the Design Review Board in relation to Site Plan Review and Urban Design sections.	Deputy for Development	Improved efficiency.	2	218
167. Consider design review by staff instead of DRB's.	Deputy for Development	Improved efficiency.	2	219
168. Conduct a full review of adequacy of staffing for design functions.	Deputy for Development	Better public service.	2	219
<b>PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b> 169. Increase number of geographic areas for batching.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Increase analysis of local impacts.	2	222
170. Establish criteria to screen out general plan amendments.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Reduce work load, potential cost savings.	2	223
171. Require requests for zone changes to be part of the batching process.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Increase analysis of cumulative impact.	2	224
172. Periodic Plan Review should continue to report to the Chief Hearing Examiner position (Chief Planner).	Chief Planner	Efficiency of management.	2	225
173. Remove distinction between hearing office and hearing examiner by eliminating hearing examiner concept.	Planning Director	Adds to consistency of Department's policy making.	2	225
174. A single, finalized staff report should be submitted to the CPC from Zone Hearings.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Adds to consistency of Department's policy making.	2	225
175. The staff of Zone Hearings should present the Department's recommendations to CPC	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Training of staff, direct input by person actually doing the work.	3	225

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
176. Structure Chief Planner position to include significant management role.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	More standard and productive organizational pattern. Better format for training.	2	225
177. Reevaluate staffing levels for combined batching and zone hearings section.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Potential staff savings.	2	226
178. Reassign Planning Commission coordination and secretariat to Council Liaison Office.	Planning Director	More efficient organizational pattern.	3	226
179. Compile reference library of ordinances and Q conditions that pertain to AB283.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Reduce time required to research specific cases.	3	227
180. Provide database that relates area numbers in the AB283 ordinance with zoning and Q conditions.	Principle Planner - Plan Implementation	Reduce time required to research specific cases.	3	227
181. Implement June 20th recommendations of Planning Director regarding EIRs.	Planning Director/City Council	Clean up environmental review process.	1	235
182. Departmental management to provide support to environmental staff.	Planning Director, Deputy Director, Principle Planner, Senior City Planner	Improve environmental process.	1	236
183. Place appropriate staff in the environmental unit.	Planning Director, Deputy Director, Principle Planner, Senior City Planner	Improve environmental process.	1	237
184. Develop ongoing environmental training program.	Senior City Planner	Improve environmental process.	1	237
185. Meet with private environmental consultants quarterly.	Deputy Director, Principle Planner, Senior City Planner	Improve environmental process.	2	237
186. Review option of city selecting the environmental consultants.	Planning Director/City Council	Improved environmental process.	2	237



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
187. EIR review should be on full cost recovery basis.	Deputy for Administration	Provide adequate revenue for EIR review.	2	237
188. Planning and DOT to work out timelines for DOT's EIR review.	Deputy Director of Planning	Reduce time to process EIRs.	2	238
189. Prepare handout to give to developers prior to their hiring EIR consultants.	Senior City Planner	Clarify consultant's role, improve EIR process.	2	238
190. Limit contact between developer attorneys and city EIR staff.	Deputy Director for Development	Develop objectivity in environmental evaluation, reduce costs of meetings.	2	238
191. City Planner's primary focus to be on training and quality control.	Senior City Planner	More efficiency, faster processing of EIRs.	2	238
192. Set a time target for each step of the environmental process.	Senior City Planner	More efficiency, faster processing of EIRs.	1	238
193. Use environmental manual immediately, while it is in process.	Senior City Planner	More efficiency, faster processing of EIRs, and more consistency in process and findings.	2	239
194. Add EIRs to Department's case tracking system.	Deputy for Administration/ Senior City Planner	Better control of EIR process.	3	239
195. Transfer environmental review for zoning administrator and subdivision to zoning administration and subdivision	Deputy for Development	More extensive environmental review, efficiency through combined functions.	3	240
196. Include site visits in initial study.	Senior City Planner	Better environmental review.	3	240
197. Avoid using a "naked checklist" for environmental review.	Senior City Planner	Avoid litigation.	2	240
<b>ZONING ADMINISTRATION</b> 198. Consolidate Zoning Investigators and AZA into a single unit: AZA to supervise at least 2 ZI; ZI to research and prepare cases for AZA approval and distribution.	Chief ZA	Improved supervision. Reallocation of resources, estimated at \$200,000.	1	245

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
199. Reassign City Planner currently supervising ZI's.	Chief ZA	Cost avoidance.	2	245
200. Eliminate ZI classification and assign personnel to Planning Assistant or City Planning Association classifications as appropriate.	Chief ZA	Improved employee morale.	2	246
201. Designate this unit as initial assignment for some personnel in the Planning Assistant and City Planning Associate classifications. Require 18-30 months in assignment before promotion or transfer.	Director/Chief ZA	Improved employee morale.	2	246
202. Develop and implement comprehensive case management system.	Director/Chief ZA	Improved workload management.	2	248
203. Establish minimum target of 90% available time to be spent by ZI on case management activities.	AZA	Improve employee productivity/case processing time.	3	251
204. Expand role of ZI's.	.		2	251
205. Establish minimum target of 85% of available time to be spent by AZA on case management activities.	AZA	Improved employee productivity and case processing time.	3	251
206. Assign one AZA, full-time, to manage the Construction Service Counter.	Director/Chief ZA	Improved processing of cases and management of future workload.	2	252
207. Eventually reassign AZA's to other departmental functions.	Planning Director	Reallocation of resources, estimated at - \$200,000.	1	252
208. Establish a 45 day standard processing time for zoning applications.	Chief ZA	Improved client services.	2	253
209. Limit unscheduled public walk-in hours at the Construction Service Counter.	Chief ZA	Improved employee productivity.	3	253



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
210. Reassign CSRA unit to Zoning Administrator's Office.	Director	Improve supervision.	3	256
211. Reorganize clerical staff and provide them with appropriate word processing equipment.	Chief ZA	Improved employee productivity.	2	257
212. Require AZA to present Division's response to appeals and prepare written reports containing BZA's decisions and related conditions.	Chief ZA	Improved staff productivity and accountability.	2	258
213. City Council should adopt by ordinance specific terms and conditions for the granting of use variances.	Mayor/Council	Reduce workload and improved staff utilization.	3	259
214. Consolidate Zoning Administrator's staff in one location.	Planning Director	Improved efficiency.	2	259
215. Support development of new pamphlets for one-stop center.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public.	2	263
216. Keep pamphlet rack stocked.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public.	3	264
217. Post information board at Counter R & S.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public.	3	264
218. Use sign-in log at counter.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public, shorten wait times.	1	266
219. Set standards for customer service.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public, shorten wait times.	2	267
220. Use sign-in log for management purposes.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public, shorten wait times.	2	267
221. Monitor counter wait times.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public, shorten wait times.	2	267
222. Develop user friendly information packet.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public.	3	268

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
223. Consolidate and simplify forms.	Senior City Planner	Better service to public.	1	268
224. Update all procedures and instructions.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency and effectiveness.	1	268
225. Maintain forms and instructions in a manual.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency and effectiveness.	3	268
226. Create new checklist for intake function.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency and effectiveness.	2	268
227. Use microcomputers for public information.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency and effectiveness.	3	268
228. Use expert system for public information.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency and effectiveness.	3	268
229. Carefully screen applications at intake.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency and effectiveness, reduce time to process.	1	270
230. Improve counter work environment.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency.	2	270
231. Improve counter workspace or redistribute intake.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency.	2	270
232. Provide better information resource to counter staff.	Senior City Planner	Improved efficiency.	1	271
233. Counter planner shall develop or review new ordinances.	Senior City Planner	Easier implementation.	2	271
234. Use AZA to decide simple cases at the counter.	AZA	Streamline process.	1	272
235. Review counter staffing.	Senior City Planner	Potential cost savings.	2	272
<b>SYSTEMS &amp; MAPPING</b> 236. Complete all ordinance maps for AB283 by December 31, 1991.	Deputy Administration	Legal requirements.	2	281
237. Complete land use maps for all community plans by December 31, 1991	Deputy Administration	Legal requirements.	2	281



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
238. Complete text for all community plans within 90-120 days.	Deputy Administration	Legal requirements.	2	281
239. Use WordPerfect for community plan texts.	Deputy Administration	Facilitate planner review and later amendments, i.e., efficiency.	3	282
240. Establish priorities for completion of Public Facilities and Open Space zoning regarding AB283.	Deputy Administration	Legal requirement.	3	282
241. Stop making two originals of cadastral maps.	Deputy Administration	Cost savings of \$800,000.	1	283
242. Stop leroying information on base maps.	Deputy Administration	Cost savings of \$400,000	1	284
243. Cartography section to keep original of the map that has planning information applied.	Deputy Administration	Potential cost savings due to not losing maps.	1	285
244. Eliminate color coding on maps.	Deputy Administration	Cost savings of \$10,000/year.	2	285
245. Request full set of original base maps from BOE.	Deputy Administration/ BOE	Provide needed reference source.	2	285
246. Eliminate unauthorized use of Counter 460S maps.	Senior City Planner	Potential cost savings due to lost maps.	2	286
247. Enforce process for requesting and paying for maps.	Senior City Planner	Increased city revenue.	2	286
248. Inventory Counter 460S maps.	Senior City Planner	Inventory control, better service to public.	2	286
249. Control Counter 460S maps	Senior City Planner	Inventory control, better service to public.	3	286
250. Require APN and TBP to be entered into cost tracking system.	Senior City Planner	Control of information, better service to public.	2	286

Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
251. Eliminate posting case numbers to maps.	Senior City Planner	Better definition of data, long range benefits.	2	288
252. Use microfilm maps at Counter 460S.	Senior City Planner	Cost savings, service to public.	2	289
253. Maps should be purchased from Mapping rather than Counter 460S.	Deputy for Administration	Better inventory and financial controls.	2	289
254. Streamline preparation of radius maps.	Senior Cartographer	Cost savings, \$40,000/year.	2	289
255. Make the official zoning map of the city the cadastral maps.	Deputy for Development	Better resource documents.	2	290
256. Maintain AB283 database.	Deputy for Administration	Retains substantial investment in current system. Long term cost savings.	2	291
257. Automate production of cadastral maps.	Deputy for Development/ BOE	Cost savings.	1	292
258. Reevaluate cartographer positions.	Deputy for Administration/ Personnel Department	Potential reallocation of resources.	2	292
259. Request new maps for subdivision counter.	Principle Planner, Design & Development	Better service to public.	2	293
260. Review appropriateness of all maps.	Deputy for Development	Potential cost savings.	2	293
261. Develop information systems strategy.	Deputy for Development	Service to public, increase efficiency and effectiveness, consultant + \$25,000.	2	296
262. System and Mapping to aggressively develop information planning for the Department.	Deputy Director Administration	Service to public, increase efficiency and effectiveness.	2	296
263. Eliminate Systems division head	Deputy Director Administration	Cost savings, improved organization pattern, - \$80,000.	2	296



Recommendation	Responsibility	Cost/Benefit	Priority	Page No.
264. Complete GIS database only for community plans already started.	Deputy Director Administration	Long term cost savings.	2	297
265. Conduct feasibility study to determine joint BOE/planning GIS.	Deputy Director Administration/BOE	Long term cost savings, better public service.	1	297
266. Implement independent PC based technologies.	Deputy Director Administration	Better public service, improved efficiency.	1	297
267. Transfer statistical and demographic position to Citywide Planning.	Deputy Director Administration/Deputy Director Long Range Planning	Improved organizational pattern, better service to staff and public.	3	298

## C. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

Table 1 lists 267 specific recommendations. Each recommendation shows the responsibility for implementation, a brief notation of the cost/benefit, and an indication of the recommendation's priority from 1 to 3.

Each recommendation is cross-referenced to pages in the report that discuss the recommendation. Recommendations contained within the body of the report are in bold print.

We have computed rough cost estimates to implement the report as shown in Table 3. These costs are additions or deletions from the existing budget. Costs have been shown for a nine-year period since this is the length of time it will require to complete the community plans.

The total costs to implement the report are estimated at \$23,979,600. These costs are offset by a variety of savings estimated at \$14,441,000. The net cost to implement the recommendations is roughly \$10 million dollars over a nine-year period or \$1.1 million dollars per year. A large portion of these costs are for office remodelling and computers. Costs are summarized as follows:

*Table 2*  
*Cost Summary*

	<u>Additional Costs</u>	<u>Savings</u>	<u>Net Costs</u>
Remodeling of Office Space	2,010,000	-	2,010,000
New Equipment	304,600	-	304,600
Computers	3,355,000	-	3,355,000
Employees	3,540,000	(14,405,000)	(10,865,000)
Employees/Consultants	13,600,000	-	13,600,000
Consultants	1,170,000	0	1,170,000
Revenue	-	(36,000)	(36,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,979,600</b>	<b>(14,441,000)</b>	<b>9,538,600</b>

To properly implement the report we suggest the following action:

**1. Recommendation:** The Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission and Planning Department should review this report and agree on an implementation plan. Such a plan should include the following:

**1. An Agreed Upon Timetable**

The timetable we have presented is preliminary and will require refinement as the issues are discussed.



**Table 3**  
**Cost Analysis for Los Angeles Planning Department Recommendations**

Recommendation		Years									TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Consultants	1	\$100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$100,000.00
Equipment	10	\$300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$300.00
Employees	11	(\$5,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$45,000.00)
Equipment	28	\$300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$300.00
Remodel	37	\$5,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,000.00
Remodel	38	\$5,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,000.00
Consultants	42	\$50,000	\$50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$100,000.00
Equipment	53	\$250,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$250,000.00
Computers	60	\$35,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$35,000.00
Consultants	62	\$25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$25,000.00
Computers	63	\$220,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$220,000.00
Computers	64	\$5,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,000.00
Consultants	66	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$440,000.00
Computers	71	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,000,000.00
Employees	76	(\$50,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$150,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$250,000)	(\$300,000)	(\$350,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$2,200,000.00)
Consultants	87	\$125,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$125,000.00
Computers	93	\$50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$50,000.00
Equipment	94	\$30,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$30,000.00
Remodel	95	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,000,000.00
Employees	102	\$400,000	\$200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$600,000.00
Emp/Consultants	109	\$800,000	\$800,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,600,000.00
Emp/Consultants	117	-	-	\$1,500,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$12,000,000.00
Employees	127	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$1,260,000.00
Computers	128	\$20,000	\$20,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$40,000.00
Employees	132	-	-	\$35,000	\$70,000	\$105,000	\$140,000	\$175,000	\$210,000	\$245,000	\$980,000.00
Computers	140	-	\$5,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,000.00
Employees	142	(\$100,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$1,700,000.00)
Employees	177	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$140,000)	(\$1,260,000.00)
Consultants	181	\$200,000	\$100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$300,000.00
Consultants	184	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$55,000.00
Employees	198	(\$100,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$1,700,000.00)
Employees	199	(\$40,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$680,000.00)
Employees	207	(\$100,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$1,700,000.00)
Employees	241	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	-	-	-	-	-	(\$800,000.00)
Employees	242	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	-	-	-	-	-	(\$400,000.00)
Employees	244	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	-	-	-	-	-	(\$40,000.00)
Revenue	247	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$4,000)	(\$36,000.00)
Equipment	252	\$18,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$24,000.00
Employees	254	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$360,000.00)
Employees	257	\$350,000	\$350,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$700,000.00
Employees	258	-	-	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)	(\$2,800,000.00)
Consultants	261	\$25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$25,000.00
Employees	263	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$720,000.00)
NET COST		\$3,972,600	\$2,397,000	\$912,000	\$147,000	\$1,000	\$427,000	\$442,000	\$397,000	\$432,000	\$9,536,000

## **2. Method of Funding**

A method to fund these recommendations will need to be developed. Although we have identified some possible sources for a few of the recommendations, new money will need to be raised. One possible source of funding would be the use of a bond funded by a \$1-2 million dollar override on permits.

## **3. Staff Coordinator**

The designation of a high level department manager (senior level or above) and support staff to coordinate implementation of the recommendations. This team should be on special assignment reporting directly to the Planning Director.

## **4. Consultants**

We believe the department is currently not equipped to implement this study. The use of a consulting team for roughly one day a week over the next year is recommended. We see this role being not only one of implementing recommendations, but even more importantly training staff to implement recommendations and learn how to analyze and install various systems.



## II. CITY FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

### A. THE CITY

Los Angeles represents an incredibly difficult and complex challenge in planning relative to its physical characteristics, geographic size and the diversity of its social/economic structure. As America's second most populated city, Los Angeles has grown to become one of the world's premier cities. Serving as the gateway to the Pacific rim, Los Angeles has unparalleled economic, human and environmental resources.

Quality of life issues are a major focus in virtually every urban suburban and rural community in the United States. The planning department encapsulates government regulatory and policy making capabilities necessary to influence the management of these quality of life issues. In virtually all communities, planning operates in a difficult and changing political environment. Policy actions that are positive for one segment of the community are often viewed as negative by another segment. Thus, planning at its best is often complex and controversial.

The size of Los Angeles is well illustrated in Figure 2. (Courtesy of the Los Angeles Planning Department).

**Figure 2**  
***How Big Is Los Angeles?***



*The greater Los Angeles area could hold the combined areas of St. Louis, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Boston, Pittsburgh, Manhattan and San Francisco*

Los Angeles presents an extremely complex set of issues. Like many great cities, many people see it being held together by thin and frayed emotional threads. A city where an incredibly diverse population faces problems of jobs, traffic, housing prices, crime, and smog coupled with general visual and environmental degradation.

## **B. THE GOVERNMENT**

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Founded in 1789, Los Angeles is a charter city, drawing its powers and authority from a voter approved charter. The limited authority given to the Mayor, City Council and other agencies have resulted in Los Angeles city government being classified as being a "weak mayor" form of government. Under this structure, the government is a delicate balance among the Mayor, City Council, other elected officials, citizen boards of commissions and agencies. The inter-relationships, as well as confusion between these various actors, has become clear in a number of recent events including, but not limited to, the police department and the Community Redevelopment Agency.

This system provides for a diffusion of power and also a lack of leadership. Instead of one city government you have 20 or 25 different governments, each often feuding with the other, each operating as isolated entities. We observed this problem and its associated impacts on the planning department on numerous occasions during the course of this study. From simple matters of how to move a telephone or put up a new sign, to complex issues of solving L.A.'s well known traffic or air pollution problems. There is no clear mechanism in Los Angeles to foster consensus.

Los Angeles is not unlike what W. Edwards Deming found in U.S. industry when he returned from Japan.\* He found each division seemingly doing the right things but suboptimizing their division over the company. Meanwhile, the entire company was going bankrupt.

It is not within the scope of our study to examine the structure of Los Angeles city government. It is our charge to evaluate and determine how planning might function better within this system.

In passing, it should be noted that the citizens of many communities including Los Angeles have given up on the idea of having their government solve their problems and quality of life issues, and have increasingly gone to the ballot box through the initiative process or the courts. Examples in Los Angeles include Proposition U, AB283, and implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act.

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\* W. Edwards Deming, a U.S. citizen, spent most of his career advising Japanese industry on ways to improve and is credited by the Japanese for much of their industrial success.



## **C. THE MAYOR**

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Although described as a "weak mayor" form of government, the role of Mayor is in an extremely important and unique position in the City which can provide a much needed city-wide perspective. Under a weak mayor form, the mayor accomplishes this by appointing individuals to committees and boards, selecting executives, influencing members of city council, and articulating city goals and objectives. As uncovered in interviews (see Appendix E) the Mayor's appointment of a staff advisor in the planning area has been seen as a positive move for planning. However, opportunities for additional planning leadership are considered desirable.

Of major importance is the Mayor's ability to appoint commissioners subject to consent of the Council. The Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals are obviously important to the planning function.

Perhaps no single action by the Mayor in the planning field is more important than the appointment of the planning director. Given the current vacancy, it is timely to consider the requirements for this position.

If the functions of the planning director were divided into two pieces, i.e. external and political functions or internal and management functions, we believe the external and political functions must take priority. As will be seen elsewhere in this report, there are major internal management problems in the planning department. However, it may be necessary to hire a second person to carry out these functions. In politically diverse and non-focused city government functions, the most important skills for the planning director are political sensitivity and city-wide leadership abilities.

**2. Recommendation:** In selecting the new Planning Director the Mayor should place first priority on the following skills:

**1. Political Skills**

The ability to interact with the Mayor, Council, Commissions, other departments and citizens to build coalitions for good planning. A forceful, politically savvy director who when necessary can play hard ball and say no.

**2. Leadership and Vision**

Someone who can assist the Mayor and Council to develop a vision of the City and build a constituency to achieve it.

**3. Recommendation:** The Mayor should assist the planning department by clarifying goals and objectives for planning and be willing to use his influence and veto powers to achieve these planning goals.

## D. CITY COUNCIL

The City Council is a full-time City Council and exercises substantial direction and power over the planning function and the entire city government. Each Council member is seen as a "mini-mayor" within his/her council district (see Appendix E, External Interviews) and the entire Council virtually always accepts the directions set by the district members.

All of the Council officers have one or more staff working on planning issues and some of these are very active within the Planning Department. In interviews, some Council staff suggested that they are doing more planning than the planners or believe they must do so because the planning department is failing in its functions. Involvement by the Council staff, in individual development applications often takes place at the lowest possible decision-making level. Council opinions are suggested to planners prior to hearings. In selected instances we observed council staff actually testifying on behalf of applicants and/or neighborhoods before official hearing bodies.

Much of the above is useful and undoubtedly necessary in a city as large and complex as Los Angeles. Nevertheless, it also creates problems such as:

- ✓ There tends to be a lack of Council interest in city-wide issues. (The suboptimization problem discussed in section "B" above).
- ✓ Planning efforts are placed where council offices push the hardest, rather than where the most important issues may be present.
- ✓ Each Council office wants the Planning Department to work on their priorities. There is an insatiable demand for projects and studies with no clear way of setting priorities.
- ✓ Planning staff becomes confused and tends toward providing "political", rather than "professional" planning recommendations.

Our interviews with Council members and staff were revealing in this regard. While all said they wanted a "strong" planning department, a few said or implied they wanted the department to do exactly what the Council member tells them to do. From a long-term perspective, the Council should understand that this latter attitude works against the Council's own best interests. Council members and staff have neither the time or background to adequately study all planning issues. The Council is in a better position to make sound political judgements if they obtain sound professional planning advice.



4. *Recommendation:* The Council offices should work with the planning department to develop a better system for setting planning department priorities, (see Section III D, Management).

5. *Recommendation:* The Council should clearly indicate to the Planning Department that they desire professional not political recommendations from the department. To reinforce this direction, Council staff should no longer testify at hearing examiner or Zoning Administrator hearings but should reserve any testimony for later in the process, i.e. Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals levels.

6. *Recommendation:* The City Council should consider the cost of administering the regulations which they legislate. A process of fiscal impact analysis should be established whereby Council must be aware of the cost of administering a new regulation before they adopt it. With this information available, the Council should either allocate additional funds to support the new program, or agree to shift the department's work program priorities.

#### **E. CITY COUNCIL PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (PLUM)**

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The City Council Planning and Land Use Management Committee plays an extremely important role in the city planning program. All planning items going to and from Council pass through the PLUM committee. Thus, they are the gatekeeper of items going to and from the City Council. This committee is in a position to assist in solving many of the problems described in Section D above and to bring a more professional perspective to issues.

The Committee is also in a position to assist in helping to develop a city-wide, rather than district perspective on the Council.

PLUM does not regularly report out the Planning Commission's recommendations when PLUM makes recommendations to the full Council. Since the Planning Commission, by its structure, is in a position to reflect a city-wide perspective, the Commission's recommendations should also go to the Council.

7. *Recommendation:* The Planning and Land Use Management Committee should always include the Planning Commission recommendations when they report to the full City Council.

8. *Recommendation:* The Planning and Land Use Management Committee should emphasize its role to elicit professional planning, rather than political recommendations from the Planning Department and to develop a city-wide perspective on planning issues.

## **F. CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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*Background:* The City Planning Commission is established in the City Charter. Its functions are:

- ✓ To give recommendations and advice to the Mayor, City Council, Director of Planning, municipal departments and agencies with respect to city planning and related activities and legislation.
- ✓ On matters of policy, to direct and supervise the Director of Planning in the execution of the Director's various powers and duties.
- ✓ Other functions as are specified by ordinance.

The five member commission is the central focal point for planning in Los Angeles. Due to the City Council's tendency to focus on Council district planning issues rather than city-wide planning issues, the Planning Commission is one of the few policy bodies that is structured to have a city-wide perspective. Although much of the Commission power comes from the charter, it also has the ability to be effective through the individual persuasiveness and political abilities of its members.

The City Charter is unusually specific in delegating decision-making authority on planning matters to department staff, thereby freeing the Planning Commission from time consuming tasks common to most planning commissions.

The external interviews conducted as part of this study, (see Appendix E) elicited the following opinions concerning the Commission:

Overall, the Planning Commission is seen as very important in providing a city-wide perspective. Many people interviewed felt the Commission is doing a good job, however, some would like to see more leadership from the Commission.

Its effectiveness appears to be dependent upon personalities and, like many political bodies, it appears to get bogged down in petty conflicts related thereto. The Commission is seen as focusing on incremental decisions with little focus on long-term, big picture issues. Thus, the Commission has a tendency to become involved in the day-to-day administration and organization of the Department.



To further examine this leadership issue we examined Planning Commission minutes for the past eight months. Based on this examination it appears that roughly 10-15% of the items coming before the Commission are policy related, the remainder are permits.

During the study we attended a meeting of the Commission held in City Hall but did not attend meetings held in the Van Nuys Women's Club or San Pedro. The City Hall meeting, held in the Council Chambers presents a somewhat bureaucratic and forbidding atmosphere for citizens. Due to the size and layout of the room it is hard to see, hear, and know what's going on. Identification signs for Commission Members and staff are also small and hard to read.

The Planning Department is normally represented at the meeting by one of the department's principle planners or deputies, a Commission coordinator, 2 secretaries, and staff involved with a particular item. It appears that some reduction in staff may be possible.

#### **Policy Orientation**

**9.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Commission should place more emphasis on their city-wide policy making role. This should be implemented by focusing additional meeting time on policy matters, possibly further delegating some permit activities, and continuing to be an advocate with the Mayor, Council members, other departments and the public for sound planning policy.

#### **User Friendly Meetings**

**10.** *Recommendation:* Citizens will form a positive or negative impression of Los Angeles planning when they attend a Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission should examine the meeting format to determine what can be done to develop a more user friendly format. Ideas to be considered can include:

- a. Having speakers come to the front table rather than speak from the podium in order to reduce formality to help with sight and sound.
- b. Having a visible sign showing which item is being discussed. A light expensive moving reader board might be used for this function.
- c. Providing larger name signs for Commission members and key staff.
- d. Other items to be determined by the Commission.

## Staffing

**11.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Department and Planning Commission should discuss the appropriate staffing level for each meeting. Adequate staff to serve the Commission and public is necessary but budget concerns should dictate that a minimum number of staff attend.

## G. CITY ATTORNEY

**Background:** As specified in the city charter the City Attorney is responsible for handling all legal matters relating to the city. As such, legal work for the Planning Department is conducted by the elected City Attorney. Work consists of offering the Planners general advice on legal issues, approving and/or drafting ordinances, and representing the City and Planning Department in litigation. There are 8 attorneys who are assigned to planning matters. Because some have other duties it is estimated that the equivalent of 7 are normally available.

There is a considerable backlog of planning ordinance work in the Attorney's office. During this study we received numerous complaints from the planners, City Council, developers, and citizens about the slowness of the Attorney's office. Our research substantiates this problem. For example:

Nine specific plans or ICO's are currently awaiting City Attorney action. These were submitted to the City Attorney 9 to 18 months ago with an average time of 14 months.

Fourteen zoning ordinance amendments are currently awaiting City Attorney action. These were submitted to the City Attorney between 5 to 102 months ago. Excluding the 102 month item, the average time the ordinances have been with the City Attorney is 13 months.

These timelines are clearly unacceptable for government policy making. The slowness appears to be caused by a number of problems including:

1. Lack of staff in the Attorney's office.
2. Lack of computer automation.
3. Loss of experienced attorneys.
4. Poor drafting of ordinances by the planning staff.
5. Priorities that place planning work at the bottom, i.e.,
  - 1st— Criminal cases
  - 2nd— Litigation (some attorneys are handling 160 cases)
  - 3rd— Drafting ordinances and giving advice on findings or other planning legal matters



In other words, it doesn't make any difference how many attorneys are theoretically assigned to planning, they can all be diverted to other issues.

Although we cannot precisely verify all the reasons for the slowness, it is clear that a solution to this problem must be found! The City Attorney needs to move to a focus on prevention (i.e. better laws and advice to departments) if the City is to ever break out of the litigation log jam.

Since changes in the City Attorney's office are outside the scope of this study, we will suggest a variety of other alternatives, some of which would need to be approved by the City Attorney and others that can be handled within the Planning Department.

#### **Attorney Assignment**

**12.** *Recommendation:* Several attorneys should be permanently assigned to the Planning Department for ordinance writing and offering legal advice. Preferably these attorneys would be located in office space within the Planning Department.

#### **Reduce Requests**

**13.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Department should reduce the frequency and number of times they ask for City Attorney advice. Planners should be capable of more independent judgement on planning matters without seeking legal advice. This would free some attorney time but will require training as discussed below.

#### **Training**

**14.** *Recommendation:* The City Attorney's office should prepare a pro-active training program for the Planning Department. Although this might appear to further add to time problems, proper training in the long term should reduce time demands. Features of this program should include:

**A. Weekly Meetings**

The weekly meetings between the City Attorney's office and Planning that are currently underway should be continued as both coordination and mutual education meetings.

**B. Documentation**

There is currently no file or manual of either formal or informal attorney opinions or memos on planning matters that can be used for training or problem avoidance. In fact, it is possible that different opinions are being given by the different attorneys working on planning issues. The City Attorney's office should prepare a manual of opinions and keep it current. Lacking this, the Planning Department itself should compile such a manual from department files.

**C. Specific Training**

Since the City Attorney's office has complaints about the work coming from Planning, they should train planners as they see fit, thus easing their work.

**D. Annual Legislation & Litigation Seminars**

Once a year the City Attorney's office should sponsor a training session (2 or 3 hours) designed to update planners, planning commissioners, and Board of Adjustment members on last years relevant state legislation and court cases impacting how planning is done in the City.

**Planning Department— Internal Coordination**

**15.** *Recommendation:* One of the Attorney's biggest complaints is the lack of quality of writing in planning documents. The Planning Department should work with the City Attorney's office to determine which planning staff are capable ordinance writers. All planning ordinances should be reviewed by these writers prior to being transmitted to the Attorney's office.

**Three Month Goal**

**16.** *Recommendation:* A target of a 3 month maximum turnaround time should be established for all legal review of ordinances.

**Contingency Plan**

**17.** *Recommendation:* If the recommendations above do not solve the problem, the Planning Department should hire their own attorney to draft ordinances. Although the Charter would still require the ordinances to be approved by the City Attorney, the approval process would be much quicker under this arrangement. The bottom line is that the city must improve upon this currently inadequate process. This addition is not shown in our cost analysis, dollars would need to be added for this position.



### III. PLANNING DEPARTMENT

#### A. OVERVIEW

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The functions of the Planning Department are set by City Charter. These functions are generally those specified for the Director of Planning including:

- a. preparation of the General Plan;  
    reparation of zoning regulations and zones;
- c. investigations and reports on the design and improvement of all proposed subdivisions of land;
- d. preparation for public projects when deemed appropriate by the Director of Planning and the City Engineer or head of any other department;
- e. other investigations when so directed by the Planning Commission, such as referrals on public improvements;
- f. Planning Commission approvals which the Commission may delegate to the Planning Director; and
- g. other duties as may be set forth in ordinance.

In a broad sense, these activities can be divided into two groups as follows:

**Planning**

**Permitting**

There are major problems in both of these areas as discussed in the following sections.

#### B. PLANNING

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**Background:** There is a substantial lack of planning for the City of Los Angeles. In many respects, the planning department is a permitting department rather than a planning department. This condition has gone on for many years and must be addressed in a forthright manner. The citizens of Los Angeles appear to be demanding more and better planning. Also, the courts have intervened on several occasions to call for better planning and undoubtedly could do so again in the future.

Our conclusions are based on the following factors, each of which is discussed in more detail elsewhere in the report.

- ✓ The General Plan is old, out of date, and drastically in need of an overhaul. Much of it cannot be used because of these problems. (See Section V, Citywide Planning)
- ✓ There is no solid research function in the Department. Such a function is common to most well run planning departments. (See Section V, Citywide Planning)
- ✓ There is a lack of relating Los Angeles planning to social/economic issues. (See Section V, Citywide Planning)
- ✓ The department is only nominally involved with transportation planning. (See Section V, Citywide Planning)
- ✓ Lack of adequate environmental planning may have been evidenced in the creation of the new Department of Environmental Affairs. (See Section V, Citywide Planning)
- ✓ The Planning Department plays only a nominal role in the city's 5 Year Capital Improvements Program.
- ✓ The lack of a good General Plan is evidenced by citizen and City Council pressure for interim control ordinances (ICO's), specific plans, and design review. (See Section VII, Neighborhood Planning)
- ✓ In several instances the courts have chosen to intervene in Los Angeles planning, i.e. bringing zoning into conformance with the General Plan (AB 283), and the proper use of environmental review (CEQA) for large projects.

Solving these planning problems will take both better utilization of current resources as well as new resources.

### **C. PERMITTING**

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The City of Los Angeles has a well developed permitting system. Many aspects of this system, such as the use of Zoning Administrators and hearing officers, are excellent and are more progressive than systems used in many communities.

However, the permitting process is hampered due to an inadequate and out-of-date planning policy base that is necessary for a smooth functioning permitting process. To a large extent, the planning program is inappropriately dominated by the permitting process.

While many procedural aspects of the permitting process are excellent, others are in need of immediate attention, including:



✓ **Environmental Impact Reports**

State law requires projects requiring an EIR to be processed within one year. This timeline is consistently not being met. Typical timelines for recently completed EIRs are 2-3 years. There is a substantial backlog of environmental cases. (See Section VIII, Plan Implementation)

✓ **Subdivision and Parcel Maps**

State law requires subdivision and parcel maps to be processed in 50 days. Actual time for subdivision has been 178 days and 240 days for parcel map cases. (See Section VI, Development and Design)

✓ **Zoning Administrator Cases**

City Code requires cases to be processed within 75 days. Actual times are running 93 days with some backlog of cases. (See Section X, Zoning Administration)

## **D. MANAGEMENT**

Most troubled organizations do not have employee problems, they have management problems. That is, managers who are not adequately setting and clarifying priorities; properly selecting, delegating, motivating, or controlling employees, or managers who are not providing systems or resources to get the job done.

We found all of the above in the Planning Department. Based on experience in studying several large cities, management problems in Los Angeles are at a crisis level. Many issues identified by employees are shown in Appendix C. Others received as part of the employees' questionnaires are:

1. Lack of clear priorities and direction.
2. Unsure of expectations or responsibilities.
3. Lack of feedback until it is too late.
4. Slowness in decision making.
5. No clear principles or mission.
6. Constant re-staffing and re-organization.
7. Managers are too political.

A few quotes from the employee questionnaires follow:

"I wasn't even told where I was assigned. I had to finally ask and introduce myself to my management. They have yet to tell me what they expect from me!"

"I think the Department is an example of bureaucracy run amuck. Each management level has successfully built its empire by hiring more and more people over the years. Except for the case work areas there is little or no pressure for a product. The nature of the work is such that employees can attend meetings and write memos for years without accomplishing much. Non-producing employees are tolerated by management without complaint."

Specific management issues and recommendations will be discussed by topics below.

### **Topic: Mission**

Current management thinking suggests that all organizations must have a clear operational mission in order to be successful. This clear mission is lacking within the planning department. The department did undergo a series of mission exercises a few years ago but the resulting missions statements were bureaucratic, not meaningful and were not effective. For example, the departments over-all mission is stated as:

#### **Mission Statement**

The Department of City Planning recommends and carries out actions to regulate use of land, to plan and guide growth, and to integrate land use, transportation and housing in a balanced manner. Our mission is to promote the social, economic, environmental and aesthetic well being of the people of Los Angeles.

Some of the apparent department missions suggested by the staff through the questionnaire, although perhaps tongue in cheek, are of interest.

"Advance Planning: Our goals for the future L.A.? I haven't heard what these are lately."

"Good question. I know what it is theoretically. But in practice it seems to be to keep council people happy, get cases out, put out brush fires as they occur. There isn't time to do anything else."

"What the department needs is a coherent well stated and intellectually defensible organizing principle and vision for the future. What we have instead is an embarrassingly simplistic "mission statement".



"The Planning Department exists to serve the needs of Councilpersons who carry out the dictates of moneyed developers in exchange for political contributions and power."

"The goal/mission of our division is to do pet projects for the City Council and keep them happy."

"In my opinion, the Department consists of 80-100 separate organizational units, each with its own agenda, lacking the cohesiveness integral to attaining the goals of the Department."

"I see the goal of the Planning Department to retard development to an acceptable level while keeping the integrity of the single family neighborhood intact."

"The mission of the Planning Department should be simply to make Los Angeles a well functioning and livable city."

"I do not know what they are. The department responds to the Mayor and council offices who are responding to others."

"In reality (as opposed to the written mission), it is to try to get some good planning that serves the present and the future of the public against all the odds and the whims of a mayor and a council that lack a vision for future. Our goal is to produce plans that can and will be implemented."

The national peer panel also commented on the lack of a clear mission or vision as follows:

"The Department has obviously fallen into a reactive mode and is therefore unable to promote the necessary long-range vision for the City. Indeed, the inability of the Department to articulate a long-range vision may be partly responsible for the present situation in which they are constantly forced to react to individual initiatives from the City Council. I sensed some frustration on the part of the staff that the Department is not listened to by other departments and elected officials. Planning will be listened to if it has something important to contribute. If the contribution to decision-making is no more than is brought to the table by other departments and elected officials, the planning contribution becomes redundant. Planners should do what they do best, i.e., develop the overall planning/policy context within which individual decisions can be made. Although such a policy context sometimes "gets in the way" of pragmatic decision-making, more often decision-makers appreciate the guidance that such a long-range vision can give to shorter range decisions."

**18.**     *Recommendation:* Planning Department management should work with the entire department to develop a clear mission for the department. What the department and managers do in relation to the mission is more important than what the mission says. The mission should be clear as to expectations in relation to elected officials, department customers, and the broader community.

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**Topic:   Priorities and Workload**

The lack of clear priority setting within the department is one of the key management issues. There is no solid, consistent mechanism for setting priorities. Priorities that are set are often soon re-set at the whim of the Council. Staff complain that priorities shift continuously. They end up being confused, demoralized and non-productive. Additionally, it's not unusual for a project to undergo extensive staff work and then sit in the City Attorney's office for a year or two because everyone has lost interest or the political crisis has passed.

The peer panel had a number of insightful comments on this topic as follows:

"In cities like Los Angeles and New York, the volume of requests to the planning department (applications environmental reviews, requests for studies and other actions) will inundate it, regardless of the staffing levels permitted by budget. Every effort should be made to rationalize the inflow: e.g., argue against overly burdensome regulations, seek to simplify existing regulations. Still the processing workload must be tamed or it will forever eat into the planning capacity (not that application review is not a legitimate and important tool of planning)."

"It seems to me there are also acceptable "short-cuts" to responding to the volume of requests for planning studies from councilmembers, neighborhood groups, etc. Even in a very diverse city, certain issues or problems will be at the heart of requests from different areas. Management can develop a standard approach to that issue or problem and train staff accordingly. Adjustments to that approach can be tailored to differences among locales. Studies and the documents that result from them can be focused on the most important issue or the problem most susceptible to a planning solution rather than becoming swamped in "comprehensiveness".



"Sometimes a professional "quick and dirty" job is better than telling a group we can't do anything for you, or embarking on a multi-year study."

"The Department needs a more proactive Department Work Program which we develop— not so much influence by City Council. Department is reacting to requests only. The new Director needs to take charge setting their own agenda."

Employees of the department also had comments about priorities as follows:

"Council members especially ask us for too many "pet" projects which are unnecessary or harmful. For instance, a city-wide ordinance to solve a problem with nuisance establishment in one council district."

"The Department's work program is subject to the whims of the politicians."

We are not suggesting that the Council, Mayor, and Planning Commission should not set the priorities for the planning department. Rather, what is needed is a more structured system for setting and maintaining priorities. A system where the planning department plays more than a passive role.

Again, the peer panel identified the needs as follows:

"Without a structured work program, it is impossible for the Department to avoid the ever-increasing demands by Council, the Commission and others for special studies which make it impossible to have a long-range comprehensible focus. With a work program in place which is recognized by both the Council and the Commission, staff can insist that elected and appointed officials identify those projects which should be deferred in order to undertake a new desired special study."

The planning department has undertaken a number of well-intentioned but futile efforts at developing priorities and work programs. These programs have tended to be:

- ✓ Too complex for easy discussion with elected officials.
- ✓ Often abandoned in favor of other priorities shortly after adoption.

Not respected by both the Council and planning department as a contract for performance.

- ✓ New projects have been added without added resources, and without terminating other projects.

**19. Recommendation:** The planning department, working closely with the Planning Commission and City Council should develop a formalized work program and priority setting system. This program should be adopted annually as part of the city budget processes. During the course of the year, changes should only be made after priorities for approved projects are changed or additional resources are added. The Planning Director must support the entire department in saying "No" to the Council on actions that take place outside of the formalized process.

No new projects should be added without a full fiscal impact analysis of the cost of completing the project and, for new regulations, the cost of administering the new regulations.

The Planning Department should take a proactive, rather than reactive role in setting the work program priorities.

The Planning Department should not make any commitments it cannot keep. It should take a strong stance with the Planning Commission and City Council in relation to what it can realistically achieve.

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**Topic: Building a Constituency**

**Background:** There is a broad consensus of opinion that planning in Los Angeles is important. However, the planning department is often seen as not being involved in key planning decisions being made within the City or playing too passive a role. The degree to which the planning department can provide good planning services will determine the extent to which it is able to develop strong political constituencies. Management must take a lead in this effort. The Department should view its contacts with citizens, businessmen, developers, the Mayor, Council, and other departments as opportunities to build these constituencies, not by doing "favors," but by providing the kind of planning services which these individuals and agencies need and expect. In a broader sense, this can be viewed as similar to the national efforts by businesses to focus on customer service. The entire planning department needs to become customer oriented.

This need was well stated by the peer panel as follows:

"Regardless of the formal, legal powers of a planning department (or commission) the agency must be continually building a constituency in order to assure a significant voice in decisions and impact on the city. This is especially true in cities and governments that have the scale of New York or Los



Angeles. While the mix of constituencies will change over time, the planning department must continually work to broaden that mix.

"Every point of contact outside the department is a potential constituent: individual applicants, neighborhood associations, city-wide civic, professional and industry organizations, media, the Mayor and staff, the Council and staff, and other public agencies. Every employee—from leadership to the clerk—must have a "constituent-orientation" where they are "selling" the services and ideas of the planning department. Every constituent should walk away from a contact with the planning agency with a positive response to one of these questions: "Did they (the planners) answer my question? Did they provide accurate and useful information/data? Did they help resolve my problem or help me achieve my objective (where they agreed with that objective)?"

"Responding to all these constituents is not the only role of a planning department, but, doing it well, establishes the credibility that the department needs in undertaking its own initiatives and positions."

A political structure without a strong executive tends to establish strong vertical relationships, and very weak horizontal ones. Specifically, each department relates directly to each of the 15 council offices, with very little interdepartmental cooperation. Similarly, each division of the planning department relates to the director, to the Commission, or to the hearing board without an adequate amount of interdivisional cooperation. Although the ideal solution would be to reorganize the city government with a stronger executive function, this is obviously not in the realm of possibility in the immediate future. Therefore, the director must work to promote horizontal relationships, even though they buck the natural trend. Opportunities should be sought where there is mutual advantage in cooperation; each department should avoid involvement in detailed decision-making of other departments which would be seen as meddling.

**20.**     *Recommendation:* The planning department should prepare a specific constituency strategy plan. Such a plan should identify constituency service as a key part of the departments mission. The plan should list all constituents, and develop a strategy for working with each group. The plan should be reviewed every six months.

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## **Topic: Communications**

For the last 20 or 30 years, as consultants have analyzed organizations, one problem invariably surfaces as the most important - communications. Recent studies show that this problem normally is perceived as the most important by two or three times as many employees as any other problem.

As the size of an organization increases, the communication problem becomes substantial. Communication is obviously easy in a one-person organization. When a second person is added, the opportunities for miscommunication begins. Contacts occur not only between employee and supervisor but also between supervisor and supervisor, and employee and employee. When an organization expands to more than one office like the Planning Department, communication problems also increase.

Most people underestimate the communication problem. They assume that a large part of communication is through words while studies show verbal communication is less than 20% words, with 80% tone of voice, body language, setting and so forth. We assume people hear what we say and interpret our words the same way we mean them, ignoring the old phrase: "I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

We also assume people will tell us what they really think, but this is not always the case. We need to know what people mean, feel, and how they react in order to communicate and manage properly.

Organizations want a "quick fix" to the communication problem. In reality, "quick fixes" are seldom available. Using one form of communication alone will normally not work. We often need to get at the same point from a variety of angles. Finally, it is often not what we say, but what we actually do that is important.

There are major communication issues within the planning department including:

### **✓ Orientation**

There is no formal orientation program for new employees. Many existing employees do not know what the planning department does in divisions other than their own.

### **✓ New Job Assignments**

Although management indicates their intent to consult with employees, prior to new job assignments, employees indicate that this is not always the case. Additionally, discussions are often not



about the potential for new assignment but rather simply notification that a person is being re-assigned. There is also a lack of training for new assignments. (See section on training).

✓ **Telephone**

There are numerous problems with the telephone system. (See section on telecommunications). Also, the departmental telephone list is not always current. Given the problems with the phone system, the lack of an up-to-date directory can create major problems.

✓ **Check-Out Boards**

Many of the divisions do not use check-out boards or those that exist are not fully utilized.

✓ **Internal Newsletter**

The department publishes a monthly internal newsletter. While this newsletter is helpful, it could be substantially improved. Its monthly frequency means that many items covered are no longer news. Particularly missing is more discussion of major planning projects underway in the department.

✓ **External Newsletter**

The department has not had any vehicle for routinely communicating with the public or the department's clients. A new effort to publish a quarterly newsletter called "Inside" is underway. The department is about to publish its second issue.

✓ **Management Visibility**

Employees complain that they virtually never see some of the departments top managers. Additionally, there is a general complaint about the inability to talk with division managers; they are just too busy.

✓ **Other Departments**

Communication between planning and other city departments seems weak. We uncovered numerous instances where major efforts were underway in other departments impacting planning that planning was unaware of. The Los Angeles city system offers little rewards for communication horizontally, yet this area of communications offers major potential for the creation of a more effective planning function.

A few typical employee responses to communication problems as received in the employee questionnaire follows:

"As you can see, I did not answer most of the questions. The reason I did not answer them is because I don't know enough about the Planning Department to answer them. This is very sad. Each division seems to be a separate entity. We have to stop this. Yes, we are separate divisions, but we make up a whole. There should be some kind of orientation informing us what each section does. I don't even know what our objectives are. Not because I don't care or I forgot, but because they are not written anywhere for us to read about. It is quite embarrassing when a phone call comes in regarding some kind of planning question and we can't answer it, and we can't even direct the call to another section because we don't know enough about the sections to direct the call."

"Often policies or procedures are implemented without first discussing them with the employees whose work they will most strongly affect. Employees should be able to offer suggestions when a new policy or procedure is going to be implemented. They have a knowledge of their work that the people who are implementing the policies/procedures often lack!"

"Work being done that has already been done by some other section. Because information is exchanged by word of mouth, we don't get important information - some sections need to be bailed out when project deadlines approach because of lack of scheduling."

"Lack of direct open-and-honest communication, fear of being stamped or branded as a trouble maker or complainer for speaking up."

#### **Internal Newsletter**

**21.**     *Recommendation:* The department's internal newsletter should be changed to a weekly or biweekly newsletter. To reduce costs a less polished publication should be used with more input from the entire department. The content of the newsletter should be changed to include more information on projects underway in the department.

#### **External Newsletter**

**22.**     *Recommendation:* The newly proposed external newsletter should be published on a quarterly basis.



## Project Assignment List

**23.** *Recommendation:* The department should develop an alphabetical list of all projects and assignments in the department. This list should be updated weekly or when changes are made. It should include the name of the staff person who handles the project or assignment and the person's telephone number.

## Other Departments

**24.** *Recommendation:* A mid- to high-level manager should be assigned as the planning department's contact to all planning relevant to city departments. This person's responsibilities should include:

- ✓ Knowing what is going on in the other departments as it impacts planning.
- ✓ Developing good working relations.
- ✓ Bringing relevant items to the attention of planning department managers.
- ✓ Arranging periodic meetings with the department employees as may be appropriate to make decisions on mutual issues.

## Orientation

**25.** *Recommendation:* The planning department should develop a comprehensive orientation program for new employees. Such orientation should expose the new employee to all sections of the planning department as well as specific orientation and training in job assignments.

## Check-out Boards

**26.** *Recommendation:* Check-out boards should be used in all departmental units. These should be designed to reflect variable work schedules and be located to provide easy reference for the employees answering the telephones. (See also section on telephones).

## Returning Telephone Calls

**27.** *Recommendation:* Many incoming telephone calls are not returned or are returned several days later. We recommend that a standing rule be adopted requiring all telephone calls to be returned prior to the end of the day they are received. This may require people staying or stopping other activities earlier. Once this policy is in place, calls can be handled with ease and the public image of the Department can begin to change. Management will need to monitor this activity for compliance and lead by example.

## Contact with Clients

**28.** *Recommendation:* The survey results and interviews indicate that the management team is not adequately in touch with the Department's clients. Each manager should be given a few applicant's or citizen's names each week or at least a few each month to call on the telephone. The calls would ask "how were you treated", "do you have ideas for us", "we just wanted to let you know we care and are trying to improve".

Information from these calls should be shared at the management meetings and with staff. Follow-up should solve any complaints but also, and most importantly, the complaint should be used to determine what improvements can be made.

## Industry Meetings

**29.** *Recommendation:* The department should establish routine meetings with representatives of industry groups. Meetings with this group should be held quarterly and more frequently if needed and productive.

## Management by Walking Around

**30.** *Recommendation:* Current management theory suggests that managers need to spend more time out of their office seeing what is actually taking place in the work place. We recommend that planning department upper level managers adopt a program of actively spending more time with employees to listen to concerns and take action. Consideration should be given to a variety of methods to solicit employee concerns. Employee recommendations should be responded to promptly.

## Planning Department Description

**31.** *Recommendation:* The planning department should prepare a booklet listing each division in the department and explaining what the division does. This booklet should include floor plan maps and room numbers.

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## Topic: Planning Department Employee Meetings & Questionnaires

*Background:* We held nine meetings during the month of January with groups of department employees. A total of 311 employees attended these meetings, roughly 90% of the staff.

The meetings were held to introduce the consultants, explain the study, discuss organizational and management theory, and elicit employee concerns and issues. A questionnaire on organizational effectiveness was



completed and collected during the meeting (Appendix A). A more expansive questionnaire was distributed for employees to complete within one week (Appendix B). One-hundred forty-six of these questionnaires were completed and returned.

Departmental issues that were identified by employees attending the meetings are summarized in Appendix C. These, of course, are employee perceptions and not necessarily facts. Nevertheless, perceptions are important and deserve careful attention. Many of these issues were verified by the consultants in other aspects of the study.

Although the tone of these comments are negative, the reader should be cautioned to place them in the proper context. Remember, the consultants were looking for issues or problems in the department and not focusing on the department's strengths.

Several extremely positive factors appear to be present in the department. We found the employees eager and ready to embrace changes and a revitalized department.

Our summary conclusions based on employee meetings and review of questionnaires are as follows:

✓ **Communication**

- There are serious and systemic communication problems throughout the department. These are vertical as well as horizontal and occur both within divisions and across divisions. Although some of this is similar to that found in most large bureaucracies, there also appears to be some deliberate and destructive brokering of information.

✓ **Consultants**

Consultants are, at times, not well managed or utilized.

✓ **Management**

Management throughout the organization and at all levels appears to need substantial improvement. Key areas include:

- ☛ lack of setting clear direction
- ☛ lack of establishing clear priorities
- ☛ poor communication
- ☛ poor delegation

✓ **Office, Equipment, Technology**

Some units located within city hall are working in demoralizing working conditions. Some of the computers and telecommunications technology are poor and out-of-date.

✓ **Personnel**

There is apparently a group of personnel practices that has resulted in some staff fear and paranoia. The notion of "do what you're told" and "don't rock the boat" is a prevalent attitude. There was considerable staff concern that the confidentiality of consultant's survey would be breached.

✓ **Policy**

The city's planning policy framework is out-of-date and, in some cases, useless.

✓ **Procedures**

Many procedures are neither clear nor documented. A variety of problems exist between the service and line units in the department.

✓ **Training**

Training is poor or lacking in most units in the department.

The organizational effectiveness questionnaire lends itself to a more straightforward analysis because of the "forced choice" answer technique. Responses to this questionnaire are shown in Appendix B.

For each of 42 questions (see Appendix A) employees were asked to choose one of the following responses:

- 1—Totally Disagree
- 2—Strongly Disagree
- 3—Somewhat Disagree
- 4—Neutral
- 5—Somewhat Agree
- 6—Strongly Agree
- 7—Totally Agree

The questions were designed so that high answers would be indicative of a strong department, low answers a weaker department. The consultants have used this questionnaire in a number of planning departments which helps to give perspective to the responses.

The average score for the entire department to all questions was 3.6. This is the lowest overall average score we have seen in our studies of planning departments. There was no single unit in the department that scored a 4 or above. Unit average scores were as follows:



Administrative Services	3.9
City-Wide	3.8
Systems & Mapping	3.8
Plan Implementation	3.7
Zoning Administration	3.4
Neighborhood Planning	3.3
Development and Design	3.2

These scores indicate need for improvement in many areas throughout the department.

Scores were also tallied by different employee groups as follows:

Director, Deputies, and Principles	3.85
Senior City Planners	3.5
Associate Zoning Administrators	3.8
City Planners	3.2
Secretaries & Clerks	4.2

This data would tend to indicate slightly more satisfaction amongst clerical classes than planner classes.

Questions department-wide that had particularly low scores are listed by question number below:

8. We have a strong emphasis on training	2.7
9. This organization seeks to identify problems quickly	2.8
16. This organization has incentives besides money for employees to do well	2
20. This organization's values are clear and well understood by employees	2
27. Managers instill excitement throughout the organization	2.7
37. Permit process in our organization is not unnecessarily complex nor burdensome on the applicant	2.7

The above responses to questions are particularly troublesome and highlight issues discussed elsewhere in this report. The data can be used by the managers of each unit to identify variations between their unit and department-wide responses. This can be used to focus on specific division issues.

Another form of analysis is to compare management responses to the response of employees in the unit being managed. Confidentiality precludes us from revealing specific scores by managers in this report. However, a number of points stand out. Generally, we find manager's score their questions higher than employees. This was true for only 3 of the

7 units. In the other four units, the managers scored lower than their employees which would indicate that management feels even worse about the organization than do the employees.

#### Use Questionnaires for Management Improvement

**32.** *Recommendation:* Planning Department managers should review the average responses from employee questionnaires (see Appendix B). Analysis of these responses should be used to develop a personal improvement program for each manager. Such an improvement program should be discussed with and approved by the Planning Director.

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#### Topic: City Hall Lobbies & Directories

*Background:* Citizens response to government and government services is based both on first impressions as well as actual service received.

The first impression received in City Hall can be described as poor at best. However, this is a city-wide problem and not just that of the Planning Department.

A recent issue of Progressive Architecture is instructive in developing a perspective on office space for the Planning Department. In discussing Los Angeles it is noted:

"...its public buildings, both civic and commercial, range from the mediocre to the trashy,..."

"City Hall, which claims to be Los Angeles' grandest public building, may appear as an impressive obelisk from a distance, but close up it's a confusion. The tower's grand main entry on Spring Street is seldom used by the public and serves mainly as a backdrop for film and TV sequences. Inside, the building is dark, baffling, and mean, stuffed with hidden offices not easily accessible to the public that the municipal bureaucrats are supposed to serve."

The general problems with city hall include poor janitorial service, dim lighting, inadequate or poor signs and directories, lack of attractive painting, and storage/junk in hallways.

Specific problems in relation to the Planning Department include:

##### 1. Directory Boards

The planning department is located on the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th floors. The department is listed on changeable wall directory boards at:



Main St.	1st floor
First Street	2nd floor
Temple St.	2nd floor
Spring Street	3rd floor
	5th floor
	7th floor

The Administration Office is identified in room 561 on all signs. Room 561 is the Planning Director's office. The remainder of the information on the signs varies for no apparent reason.

Three of the six signs identify "Information and Public Office", as room 460S. The S evidently signifies Counter S in Room 460, however, this is confusing since there is no room 460S. The office of environmental quality is identified in room 517 on one of the signs. Two of the signs identify "Information Public Office" in room 500, however, this is not a public information office room.

Some public functions such as the subdivision counter, the planning department hearing room and publication sales location are not identified on any signs. The only comprehensive directory is located on the 5th floor.

## 2. Other Signs

There is generally a lack of clear signs and arrows to help the public find public offices. Signs that do exist are not easily seen when exiting the elevators. Other signs tend to be misleading.

Specific examples of good and bad signage include:

4th Floor: The sign to the permit processing center located on the fourth floor is a good exception. It is large and easily seen at the end of the hall when exiting the elevator.

5th Floor: Although the 5th floor directory is comprehensive and up-to-date, other signs on this floor are inadequate. Some are old, in poor condition or tearing away from their backing, or simply do not exist. The first sign you see when exiting the elevator is a large "Department of City Planning" sign on the glass over the transom. However, this office serves primarily internal functions rather than public functions. There are no clear or adequate signs to the public hearing room, large conference room or director's office located on this floor.

6th Floor: The large Zoning Administrator sign on the glass over the transom is appropriate. Also the signs to Room 605 and

655 are large and easy to read. However, there is no sign identifying the public counter on this floor nor is there a standard directory sign.

7th Floor: There is a directory board on this floor but it only identifies offices on the 7th floor.

### **3. Junk and Storage**

Many of the halls throughout City Hall are used for junk or storage. This gives a very unprofessional look. Additionally, the few wall displays that do exist appear to have been there for years.

Various material stored in the hallways on the 5th, 6th and 7th floors were not moved throughout our study as evidenced by layers of dust. This included a variety of furniture and chairs, some broken, old maps and displays, files and cardboard storage boxes. The general impression is that no one cares about this place. To some extent, the same problem occurs within the offices.

One of the better airlines tells their staff that if a customer finds a dirty coffee cup, they also assume the airline performs poor maintenance on their aircraft. What do hallways filled with junk say about the planning department's ability to issue permits on a timely basis?

### **4. Lighting**

Lighting throughout city hall is at a low level, probably for energy conservation purposes. However, increased lighting at the key public areas could help the overall image.

### **5. Painting**

The peeling, chipped, cracking or unattractive paint on the hallway walls does little to brighten the image of public service. These areas are depressing to both the public and employees.

## **Directories**

### **33. Recommendation:**

- a. Key public planning department functions should be identified at directory signs on the 1st through 7th floors. Four or five functions should be identified, including the public counters, director's office, the public hearing room, and purchase of maps and documents. Department management should determine the appropriate listings.
- b. Comprehensive directories of the planning department (similar to the existing one on the 5th floor) should also be located on the 4th, 6th and 7th floors.



## Signs

**34.** *Recommendation:* Attractive and colorful signs and arrows identifying various planning functions should be placed throughout the lobbies on the 5th, 6th and 7th floors. We suggest some of these signs be placed on the elevator walls so they are seen as soon as people leave the elevator. Others should be placed at appropriate locations in the halls. Existing torn, faded and hard to read signs should be removed. The Department of City Planning sign over the transom on the 5th floor should be removed. The planning department's excellent graphic staff should assist in sign preparations.

## Junk & Storage

**35.** *Recommendation:* The [redacted] should not be used for junk and storage. All of this material should be removed immediately. The Planning Department should sponsor a clean up day, not only for the hallways, but all the offices. Employees should be encouraged to dress casually on this day, bring in a pizza for lunch, and have fun tackling this most needed job.

## Lighting

**36.** *Recommendation:* Lighting intensity should be increased in the hallways that are frequently used by the public.

## Painting & Displays

**37.** *Recommendation:* The halls should be attractively painted and changeable displays illustrating key planning ideas or work underway should be added. Lacking the ability to accomplish the painting, the Department's excellent graphic staff could be turned loose on creating signs, displays, and/or super graphics.

## General Atmosphere

**38.** *Recommendation:* The "dark, baffling and mean" atmosphere with "bureaucrats in hidden offices" image should be changed. We recommend that many of the doors from office areas to the hallways be kept open during business hours. Frosted glass should generally be replaced with clear glass. As the department is reorganized and office spaces improved (see recommendations in Section IV, Administrative Services), it would be appropriate to experiment with moving one or more reception functions into the hallways to provide a more interesting and human atmosphere.

**Topic: Managers Must Manage**

**Background:** Harold Geneen, the well publicized former manager of ITT coined the phrase, "managers must manage". What he means is that managers must take responsibility for bottom line productivity and getting the job done.

In our six months of working with planning department managers, we have heard and witnessed a management culture that is not pro-actively aimed at getting the job done. Managers describe their divisions and problems as if they were not a part of them. They view external forces as beyond their control or influence. In short, the department's culture seems to say that managers in the planning department are victims.

Most of the internal problems of the department which we encountered are management related, pure and simple. The management staff must take responsibility for resolving these problems and should involve the rest of the staff in their resolution.

There appears to be more competition among management staff than is productive. Clearly, a team approach to management is required with all members pulling in the same direction. This will be a key challenge for the new planning director.

We recognize that some issues are extremely complex and difficult to handle. The lack of city-wide leadership, uncoordinated departments, and funding shortfalls can tax the best manager. Nevertheless, these issues must be continually addressed on a daily basis. However, even smaller issues seem to elude department management. For example, we heard at considerable length why it was close to impossible to remove old broken down furniture from the hallways. We heard from deputies how they could not get supplies, or had to collate and staple materials themselves.

The culture starts at the top levels of management. Unfortunately, it tends to gradually be transmitted to all levels of the department and thereby substantially impacts the department's ability to move ahead. Unfortunately, these attitudes, once embedded in an organization, can be extremely hard to change.

There also appears to be confusion amongst managers as to how to handle political issues. This was well stated by one staff member as follows:

"Too often a report or project is written in such a way as to rationalize what the Planning Commission or Council office wants rather than to be a reflection of the planning staff's true professional opinion. I cannot recall ever having seen a staff recommendation for disapproval of a Commission or Council initiated proposal. We are too afraid of alienating Council, especially at budget time."



**39.** *Recommendation:* Management in the planning department needs to aggressively and pro-actively manage the department. Shifting the attitude to, "we can find a way to do it", is necessary. Upper level managers should find supervisors, managers and staff within the department who are willing to accept this new attitude. These people should be given encouragement, authority and support. The theme song of the department should become "lead, follow, or get out of the way". This new direction will take a cultural change and it may require 3-5 years to achieve. Management training will be an essential ingredient.

**40.** *Recommendation:* Deadlines for projects and permits should be set throughout the department, from top to bottom. Staff work should be reviewed throughout the course of a project with changes in direction or emphasis made as appropriate.

**41.** *Recommendation:* The planning department should provide the Planning Commission, Mayor and City Council with professional opinions, not political opinions.

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**Topic: Management Training**

*Background:* The Planning Department mirrors many organizations where employees start in a professional or technical role and are appointed to management positions with little or no training in management. We surveyed the background of 19 of the planning departments top managers as shown in Table 4.

*Table 4*  
*Los Angeles Planning Department Managers*

Percent with Bachelor's degrees	100%
Percent with Master's degrees	79%
Percent with management related degrees	10%
Average years of planning experience	20 years
Average years of management experience	10 years
Average number of hours of management seminars	80 hours

As is evident the planning department managers are well educated with 79% having master's degrees. However, only 10% have degrees in a management related field. We did find considerable hours reported in management seminars, i.e. an average of 80 hours, however since the average number of years in management was 10 this results in an average of only 8 hours per year. Irrespective of this training we found severe management problems.

Training and retraining of managers within the department will require substantial time and effort. The leadership of the new planning director will be an important part of this effort.

**42. Recommendation:** A substantial management training program should be developed for the planning department. Such training should start at the upper levels and then cascade down through the entire department. Features of the program should include, amongst others:

- ✓ A comprehensive management course taught within the department to all upper level management.
- ✓ Specific counseling and improvement programs for each of the upper level managers.
- ✓ Encouragement for mid and upper level managers to pursue advanced degrees in management.
- ✓ Use of the implementation of this report as a management training device (see recommendations on implementation).

## **E. ORGANIZATION**

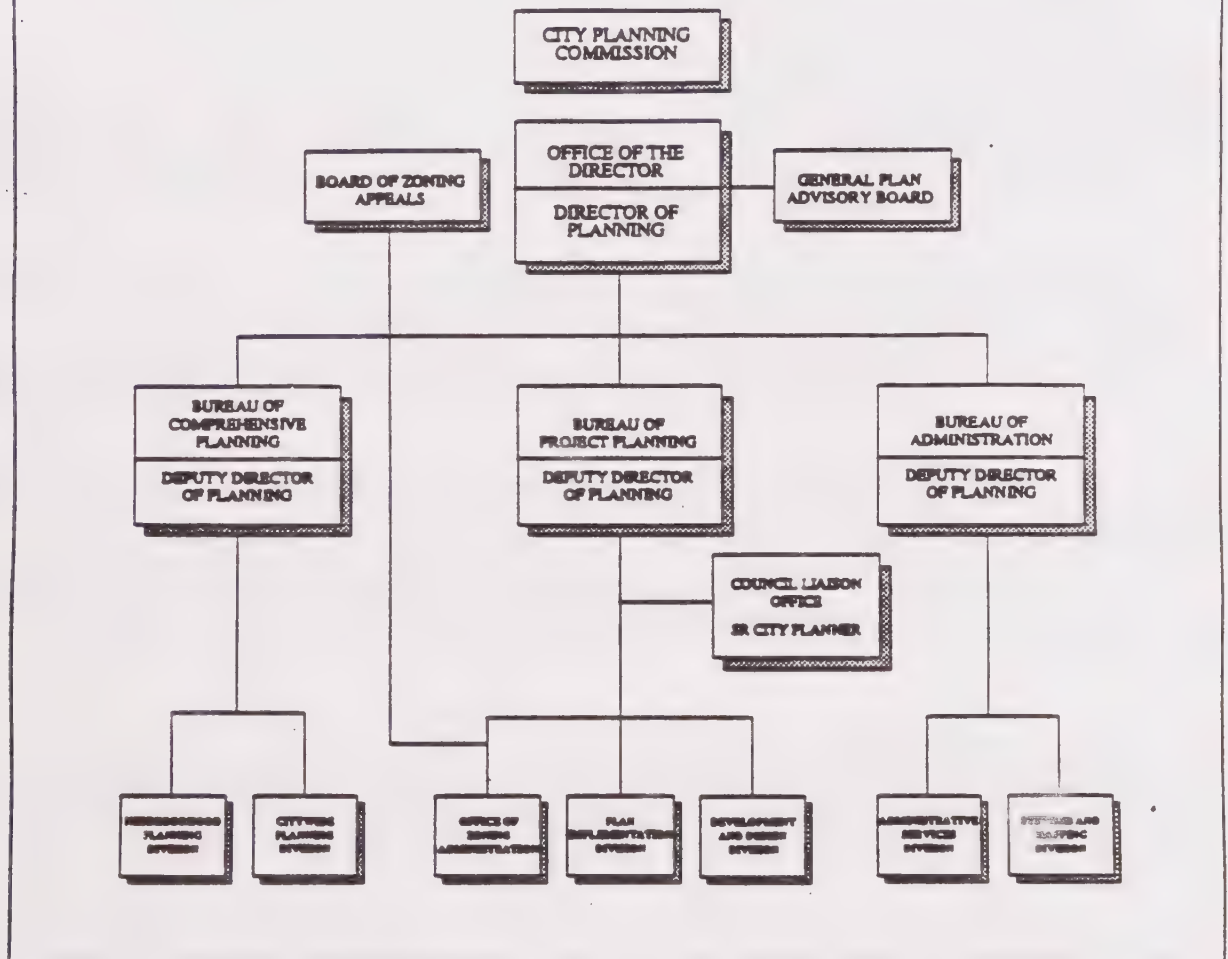
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**Background:** The planning department's top three layers of organization as of December 1990 is shown on Figure 3.

This organizational pattern is typical of that found in many organizations, i.e., a director, three deputies, and seven division heads. However, as can be seen, spans of control are very small, i.e., 2 people report to two of the deputies and three to another. Contemporary management theory suggests that much larger span of controls are possible and often desirable. For functions like planning, perhaps a range of four to seven would be more appropriate. This same pattern is repeated down through the organization. For example, the number of people reporting to Senior Planners or equivalent are an average of 3.6.



**Figure 3**  
**Los Angeles City Planning Department Organization Chart**  
**December 1990**



A similar pattern takes place for those reporting to City Planners or equivalent is an average of 3.2.

These small span of controls also tend to create more layers in an organization. Contemporary management theory suggests removing as many layers as possible in organizations. There are currently roughly six layers in the department as follows:

Planning Director  
 Deputies  
 Principles  
 Sr. City Planners  
 City Planners  
 Associates and Assistants

The department has been noted for continual reorganizing and we received many complaints from employees in this regard. One employee suggested:

"I don't care how the department is organized, but from an administrative perspective, I wish management would stop reorganizing the Department every six months."

Several parts of the department were reorganized during the course of this study. Organizations often reorganize for the wrong reasons. Problems occur in a unit, and rather than deal with the problem directly, the organization is changed. However, generally the problem doesn't relate to the organizational pattern, but rather a series of other issues.

Contemporary organizations do need to be "light on their feet" to react to changing conditions. At times this calls for organizational change. However, another way to react to change is through the use of special task forces that operate outside the normal organizational structure. This model is more and more being used by private industry and could have some advantages for the planning department.

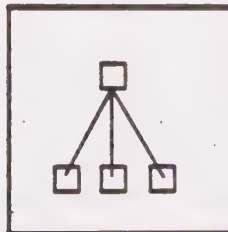
A variety of organizational issues and recommendations are presented by topic below.

### **Topic: Upper Level Organization**

**Background:** The upper level organization of the department should be highly contingent upon the skills and desires of the new planning director. Three likely patterns would be:

#### **1. Three or Four Deputies**

This would be similar to the current organization. It would likely be a good pattern for a director who wants to have a strong hand internally, but also a small span of control to allow spending more time outside the department.

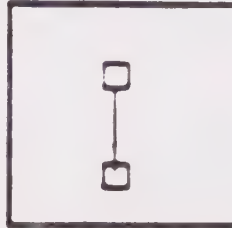


#### **2. Assistant Director**

Under this pattern the director would manage his/her time externally to the department with the assistant director running the internal day to day operations of the department. Given Los Angeles'

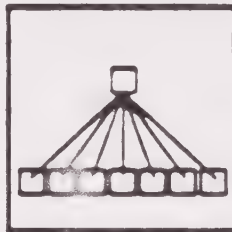


political structure, this pattern could have some major advantages. Should this pattern be adopted, we would likely recommend eliminating the Deputy Director levels with the principal planner level reporting directly to the assistant director.



### 3. Multiple Deputies

Another pattern might be multiple deputies, i.e., 7 or 8. While a few strongly organized directors may be able to handle this system, it could inhibit the director from being able to spend enough time on outside affairs.



**43.** *Recommendation:* The upper level organization of the planning department should be set by the new planning director. The organizational pattern should be aimed at decreasing levels in the organization, increasing spans of control, and providing the planning director adequate time for external affairs.

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Topic: Work Teams/Task Forces

**44.** *Recommendation:* The department should use more special work teams. Such teams would be organized for a specific project, normally lasting six months to two years. Teams should be organized in relation to specific skills needed. Members should commit themselves to the duration of the team. The work team would disband after completion of the project. Examples of this are the organizational pattern used for the AB283 project and the one recommended for the Balanced Growth Element.

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## Topic: Decentralization

**Background:** Currently the planning department operates on a centralized basis. Although there is a valley office and a few isolated other counter intake locations, all units report to a centralized management structure. Many large complex organizations today are finding major advantages to decentralizing into smaller units. Smaller units tend to be "quicker on their feet" to institute changes, are closer to the clients, have less bureaucracy, are well liked by employees, and are often more productive.

However, in government and planning, decentralization can also create problems of consistency since there is one planning commission, one mayor, and one city council. Most successful decentralized organizations do simultaneous centralizing/decentralizing. They create a strong but small central function (home office) and decentralize everything else. These organizations require good management and clarity of purpose or mission.

Given the large population and geographic size of Los Angeles, we believe the long term direction for planning should be to move to a decentralized structure. Under such a structure, smaller geographic units actually located in the communities would handle all functions in a holistic fashion. Such a structure would require good connections to city hall. Normally this is accomplished through computerized data bases and data sharing. As discussed elsewhere, such systems are needed in the planning department but will not be available for a number of years. Decentralization also requires sophisticated strong management. As discussed elsewhere, the department currently has numerous management problems.

Finally, it may be difficult to decentralize without coordinating decentralized planning functions with other city departments. It might also be useful to consider a more major city-wide decentralization approach, perhaps even with multiple planning commissions.

The peer panel had some interesting comments on decentralization as follows:

"Los Angeles is too large a city to make all of the planning decisions downtown. Many issues have no city-wide significance and can be resolved at the local level with only a minimum of long-range policy guidance from centralized planning. The key is to clearly define which issues are local in nature and which are of city-wide significance. Local issues should have a very heavy involvement of local citizens and businessmen in their resolution. I would not advise, however, the delegation of this decision-making to a citizen group, such as has been done in some instances with design review.



As most members of the peer group agreed, I believe it would be difficult to move into full scale decentralization at this time. Rather, immediate attention should be on the operation of the department, with decentralization phased in at a later date."

"Given the present level of problems with the Department, it is probably premature to launch a new effort like decentralization. Nevertheless, the Department might experiment with decentralization with the intent to fully implement it at a later date if successful. At least the zoning administration and community planning function should be decentralized to outlying communities. Many of the planning issues are purely local in nature, and should be resolved at the local level where access is convenient for the citizens involved. Consideration should be given to assigning community planners to geographic areas, rather than have them bouncing around the city from one specific plan to another. The assignment to specific geographic areas will insure that all neighborhoods in the City have equal access to planning services, not just those which make the strongest demands."

A true study of the cost/benefits of decentralization goes beyond the scope of this study. However, since we believe it does offer long term potential, it may be useful to conduct some experiments in relation to decentralization.

**45. Recommendation:** The city is encouraged to look at city-wide organizational patterns of decentralization. Such a study could be part of current efforts to re-look at the city charter.

**46. Recommendation:** The planning department should experiment with decentralization by adding additional functions to the valley office. This experimentation should include having valley office staff's primary reporting relations be to a valley office director.

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**Topic: Division Size**

**Background:** The department has been fixed on the notion that divisions or units should be relatively equal in size, i.e, one principle planner shouldn't oversee 50 people while another oversees 100. We see no merit to this approach. Related functions should be grouped regardless of size. Large units may be appropriate for some functions, small units for others.

**47.** *Recommendation:* In looking at future organizational changes, the size of each division should not be the primary criteria for structuring the division. Rather, the specific nature of the function, responsibilities, complexity, and importance of task should be the criteria.

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**Topic:** Other Organizational Issues

**48.** *Recommendation:* A variety of sub-unit organizational issues are discussed in other parts of this report. Other specific organizational recommendations should follow the department's preparation of a refined work program. Options to be considered amongst others should include:

**1. City-Wide Planning**

To be effective, city-wide policy planning needs to create a narrow focus on city-wide issues, and leave all local issues to community or neighborhood planning. Thus it may be useful to separate community planning from city-wide planning.

**2. Community Planning/Neighborhood Planning**

Since community planning and neighborhood planning deal with localized issues, it may be advantageous to combine them. One option would be to combine them and create a valley division and a downtown division.

## **F. TELEPHONES**

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The principal objectives of this portion of the study were to review, evaluate, and make recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's telephone system. This study was in response to various and frequent concerns that the existing telephone system did not provide for an adequate handling of incoming calls and internal communications.

We have reviewed internal and external telephone communications. We have given special attention to new technologies available in allowing for efficient public access to the Department and internal means of communicating.

The methodology for the telecommunication analysis consisted of interviews, observations, information provided by the Department of Planning, Department of General Services, telecommunications vendors, and Pacific Bell.



**Topic: Network Management**

**Background:** The Planning Department is part of the City Hall telephone network consisting of Centrex services provided by Pacific Bell. It is a key system which does not provide the more sophisticated digital Centrex services that a digital system offers. Nonetheless, the system can be adapted to meet the Planning Department's requirements and improve on present conditions.

A plan was developed several years ago to renovate the City Hall buildings. This was intended to upgrade office spaces and to install new conduits and a digital telephone system. Budget constraints have caused this project to be indefinitely deferred. However, Pacific Bell is gradually installing a digital system that would serve the City Hall telephone network. Completion is scheduled for June 1992. Other locations are already serviced by digital systems.

Telecommunication requirements are requested annually by the Planning Department and are budgeted by the Department of General Services. Extraordinary needs, such as remodeling of work areas to accommodate organizational changes, relocation of staff to other quarters, etc., are separately budgeted by the Planning Department and the funds, when approved by the City Council, are transferred to the Department of General Services for implementation. The purchase of telephone answering machines and other devices are also budgeted by the Planning Department. Such devices must meet the approval of the Department of General Services before acquisition. General Services will then install and maintain the equipment.

There have been no recent comprehensive studies of the Department's telephone system. Changes to the system have been made to support reorganization needs and to accommodate the relocation of various work units. Consequently, the telephone system has evolved in an unplanned fashion. There is a general lack of fundamental information - such as traffic volumes, desired level of service, number of busies, etc. - which would assist in making decisions to improve or maintain the system. The staff reported that during busy periods, all lines are in use suggesting that there must be numerous "busies" experienced by outside callers. This is a condition noted throughout the Department.

The Planning Department has experimented with answering machines and call sequencer's to assist in handling the large volume of telephone calls. Four call sequencer's were purchased between 1986 and 1988 and only one is in use (City Hall Room 460S). Nine answering machines are in use; four of which are in executive offices of the Department.

There is a need to provide a comprehensive Department-wide policy and procedure regarding the management and use of the Department's telecommunications system. While the Department relies on the Administrative Division to review, evaluate, and submit for approval to the Department of General Services Telephone Service Requests, there is no standard set of guidelines to assist the Administrative staff in their review. A central management capability for ensuring that the Department's communications resources are handled cost effectively and are fully optimized is essential in a fiscally constrained environment.

The management of the Planning Department should have sufficient information generated from the telephone system's operation to be able to respond to changing conditions and problems experienced by users. A system administration function should be assigned and one of its responsibilities should be to collect cumulative data on the system and user activities such as call types, volumes, call times, connect times, messages taken, call return times, etc. This data should be periodically analyzed for management decisions to be made regarding grade of service, staffing needs, use of answering devices, messages given, etc. System information should be able to produce reports for the system manager to detect when conditions are at variance with performance parameters established by the Department.

In order to address the needs for improving the Planning Department's Telephone System management, several recommendations are discussed below.

**49.**     *Recommendation:* Establish a Department policy and procedure for managing, administering and coordinating the Department's overall telecommunication system. This will allow for the establishment of a central responsibility in the Department for monitoring, auditing, and evaluating telephone usage; evaluating individual telephone requirements, and analyzing them in view of current and planned configurations; and development and implementation of uniform telecommunication criteria for service delivery.

**50.**     *Recommendation:* Request Pacific Bell to conduct a busy study. There are no available statistics showing, especially in the busiest periods, how many callers attempted entry into the Planning Department telephone system. The busy study would provide essential information regarding the number of calls receiving busy signals and which units of the Planning Department experience the largest number of "busies". This information will assist in determining the specific grade of service being provided at this time and how many additional lines are required to establish an improved level.



**51. Recommendation:** Establish Grade of Service Parameters. Specific grade of service levels have not been determined for incoming telephone calls. Decisions to add equipment, install or remove answering machines, install or not install call sequencers, assign receptionist duties, and other considerations which affect taxpayers telephone queries and other agencies' calls are not based on empirical data. This results in inconsistent caller service, certainly "busies", and frustration on the part of the staff when they must respond to complaining callers who report frequent redials and lack of returned calls.

Management must define, in broad terms, the level and type of service to be provided incoming callers in slow and busy periods (e.g. provide number and transfer calls; number of attempts to dial into system; type of message to be provided; etc.) By evaluating the ramifications of verifying service levels and public contacts, management can make appropriate decisions regarding public service.

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**Topic: Telephone Service - Incoming Calls**

**Background:** Incoming calls to the Planning Department are answered by receptionists at approximately 46 answering points. The principal answering points are staffed by several clerical personnel who take turns answering the telephones. The typical answering routine is for the receptionist to take the call, route the call to person requested using a intercom line to call the proper telephone extension. If person is not in, a message is taken.

If it is a call for another City department or Planning Department Unit, the call is transferred using the Centrex transferring feature. If a "busy" is experienced, the number to call back is given to the caller. In some Planning Department Units, transfers are not made due to traffic volumes or because telephone system prevents transfers (see discussion regarding 3rd and Figueroa location).

Typically, Department personnel share lines. This means that direct dial, one of the most convenient features of Centrex services, is not utilized because there are insufficient lines servicing the Department. This is a major problem identified by Departmental staff because it creates "busies" and outside callers cannot reach their party directly.

To provide improved service and reduce caller inconvenience and complaints, it is desirable to have incoming callers dial directly to the person they seek. Many calls are returned calls asking for a specific person.

It is not currently feasible to determine how many lines and where in the Planning Department that they are required most urgently. However, the large number of calls being handled at a number of locations together with the number of lines allocated to those functions indicates that the number of lines is insufficient. Completion of the busy study recommended above would provide the information necessary to reconfigure line allocations.

The highest priority will be to upgrade the incoming capacity so that outside callers will have greater access to the Department. The Department of General Services advises that the City Hall Centrex System now has lines that can be assigned to the Planning Department. This situation varies from time to time as was experienced some months ago when additional lines were not available for assignment.

A medium priority is the assignment of personal lines to all Planning Department staff allowing for direct dial to each person by any caller either from outside the Department or from within. This should be the long-term goal, but it may not be achieved at this time due to the availability of Centrex lines from Pacific Bell.

Requisitioning of lines should be made to the Department of General Services. Cost of the additional lines should be included in that department's overall budget for City-wide telecommunications services.

It is equally important to assure speedy call processing so that a maximum number of callers can enter the system. This means keeping live receptionist calls as short as possible and as few as possible. Another problem is call transfers. It is common for calls to be transferred to a station and no one is there to take the call. This necessitates returning to the caller, taking a message, or providing a number to call.

**52.**     *Recommendation:* Increase number of incoming lines where highest volume of incoming calls is identified by the busy study. Increase the number of telephone lines so that all Planning Department personnel who have a demonstrable need to receive directly dialed incoming calls have their own lines. It should be the Department's goal to achieve direct dial for all personnel. Telephone lines are arranged through General Services as part of their budget.

**53.**     *Recommendation:* Install a Departmental Voice Processing System. Technology is available to provide for an automated call answering and processing system that efficiently handles incoming calls, dissemination of announcements to the public, and maintains interval communications. There are many systems available in the marketplace depending on the desired features.



The sharing of lines has resulted in the Planning Department having to staff an extraordinary number of answering points. This causes a large number of call-answering activities to be handled by clerical and professional staff. Many of the calls are "returned calls," and under these circumstances, it is not feasible to expect detailed messages to be written by the receptionist. The frequent interruption to answer phones has made the staff less productive on their daily activities. Overall, this produces an inefficient method for processing calls and doing other work. The public is not well served and Departmental staff is less productive.

We recommend that the Planning Department install an automated call processing system which would have the following features:

- **Automated Attendant.** Calls are answered and callers may dial the desired extension themselves with voice prompts. If no answer, the caller can leave a detailed voice message or return to the operator for further assistance. An added feature is, if callers know the person being called but do not know the extension, they can spell the name of the person using the keys on a touch-tone telephone.
- **Callers hear a personal greeting when an extension is reached, but if the person called is not available to respond a message can be left. There are many features that can be considered:**
  - callers can review messages
  - callers can re-record messages
  - callers can mark messages "urgent"
  - callers can escape to a live operator
- **Voice Mail.** The voice mail feature allows the callers' voice messages to be recorded and played back in the original voice of the caller. Because they convey the caller's tone as well as the message, the context and the content are understood. An added feature may be the "send a copy." This allows comments to be added to messages and to forward them to other users. This feature may be desirable in the Planning Department since case processing activity may require forwarding a caller's message to another unit in the Department.
- **Information Center Mailboxes.** This is a feature which would likely be of valuable service to the public. Recorded announcements are available to the public and employees in a voice bulletin-board format any time of the day or night. Information is accessed by callers with touch tone telephone. The announcements can be date and time of hearings, cases to be heard, even listings of cases being processed by Department units. This feature allows employees to be relieved from having to repeat frequently asked information.

The implementation of such a system requires that the Department make a comprehensive analysis of its needs. Implementation of the recommendations above regarding traffic and busy studies and other system diagnostic information will help define the parameters and functionality of the system. However, Planning Department management must decide regarding the grade of service it desires to provide. This recommendation would result in a major change in the manner that public and other telephone calls are processed, as well as how internal communications are handled. Implementation of this recommendation would increase the productivity of clerical and professional staff, and improve the level of service to the public.

Since there are many different types of voice processing systems being sold today, we recommend that the Department undertake a detailed study to outline its requirements and system specifications. Costs of a voice processing system (hardware and software) depends of the number of subscribers (individuals served by the system), ports or channels (grade of service), and hours of message storage. Decisions regarding each of these factors will affect the basic system costs. In addition, technical support during installation, telephone equipment changes required to implement the system, and training and operating manuals are other costs to be considered.

Pacific Bell is currently developing a proposal to the City for a voice mail system. Should the City accept the proposal and implement it, the potential is very high for the Planning Department to be included in this system. The cost could be within \$8 to \$9 per mail box.

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#### **Topic: Call Sequencers and Answering Machines**

**Background:** A temporary alternative to the more complete solution of implementing a voice processing system is the use of call sequencers and answering machines. As noted earlier, the Planning Department currently has three call sequencers in storage which could be installed immediately in high telephone traffic areas. In addition, answering machines could be procured and installed in those areas where staff is frequently unable to answer calls when received.

City Hall, 6th Floor - Public Inquiries, Development and Design Division. The Division has experimented with the use of an answering machine and has discontinued its use. At the present time, answering public inquiries is a responsibility divided between the clerical and professional staff. A telephone attendant schedule has been devised as follows:



Working hours 0700 - 1300  
Working hours 1300 - 1600  
Working hours 1600 - 1800

Clerical staff  
Professional staff  
Clerical staff

An earlier schedule using an answering machine part of the time (between 1000 and 1600) allowed clerical staff to be relieved of attending phones for approximately six hours. Under the new schedule, clerical staff is only relieved of attendant duties for about three hours. The vast majority of calls are directed to the professional staff and many are call backs to a specific staff person. Other duties of clerical staff have expanded as well. This is a typical situation when a voice processing system resolves the problems.

**54.** *Recommendation:* We recommend, as a temporary alternative to procuring a voice processing system, that the Planning Department use call sequencers and answering machines. It is important for the Department to conduct a more detailed study of call volumes and times of day to ensure the effective use of this equipment. Based on the high level review we have given to the Department's telephone needs, areas which would benefit from these installations are:

- 221 South Figueroa Street
- City Hall - Sixth Floor, Development and General Design Division
- City Hall - Office of Zoning Administration

This recommendation will not be needed if Recommendation 53 is carried out.

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**Topic: General Telecommunication Observations**

In the course of our review of the telephone system, we noted a number of problems common to all areas. This section calls attention to these problems and provides recommendations and an implementation strategy for improvement.

**Background:** Intercom Lines. On a number of occasions, it was reported that telephone traffic was so high that having one intercom line to route calls to the proper extension was insufficient. While it is feasible to install a second intercom line on instruments, this would reduce the number of lines to serve the public especially where the answering point depends on a ten-button instrument (ten-button instruments now can handle eight lines; this would be cut back to seven lines). We do not recommend this change. It was also noted that staff frequently are unable to call back in a timely manner, resulting in additional calls being made by the public. While it is likely that some staff are more prompt than others in returning calls, telephone lines are often totally utilized for incoming calls

preventing access by staff to a line to return calls. The recommendations regarding obtaining additional lines and using an automated voice processing system would improve this condition. In addition, the Department should adopt a policy citing the maximum amount of time that should elapse before returning a call (see section on communications).

**55. Recommendation:** We recommend that staff training in telephone use be conducted throughout the Department. The additional lines and training staff to call one another on their line would negate the need to occupy an intercom line for internal communications.

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**Topic: Specific Locations Telecommunication Observations**

Certain locations of the Planning Department are experiencing specific telecommunication problems. In this section, we call attention to those problems and identify various solutions.

**Background:** 221 South Figueroa Office. Several significant problems were noted at this office location:

- Telephone junction and jack boxes are improperly situated on the floor. It is reported that they are frequently "knocked about" causing loss of connectivity and requiring maintenance.
- The telephone system is partially tied into the City Hall Centrex System. All lines housing the 617 prefix are served by another system (DMS 100) and are not tied into the City Hall Centrex. This causes major communications problem:
  - ✓ Calls cannot be transferred either inside the building or to any City Hall Centrex number.
  - ✓ Callers have to call back to reach a City Hall Centrex number.

The problems noted above will be corrected when the building lease has been signed. It is reported that because occupying the building was a "rush job," a number of conditions were left incomplete. It is intended that the telephone lines all tie into the City Hall Centrex and that the internal cabling will be corrected. The schedule for this work to be completed is not known at this writing.

- Lack of receptionist staff creates a work overload for the clerical staff. Calls are inefficiently handled because there is no method to adequately notify receptionists when staff is unavailable.



**56.** *Recommendation:* All clerical positions should be filled to provide for the full complement of authorized staff. An in-out status board should be used by all staff to keep clerical personnel informed of availability.

*Background:* City Hall - Public Counter Room 460S. This is one of the busiest locations in the Planning Department with respect to processing public inquiries and related services. This is also the location where the only call sequencer is in use. However, with only five lines and about 15 professional staff (15 extensions) having access to those lines as well as the public, there is a system overload. In addition, on Mondays and Fridays, calls from San Pedro and West Los Angeles satellite offices are call-forwarded to this station.

Observation at this location indicates that for a part of the time each day all lines are in use. Callers cannot get through. No studies have been made to reveal the number of "busies," the system experiences.

It is reported that about 50% of all calls are misdirected to this location. City switchboard operators connect all "planning" calls to this location. As a result, staff have to redirect a large number of calls to other City offices and locations within the Planning Department. No tally has been made as to where the majority of these calls are redirected.

**57.** *Recommendation:* Program the call sequencer to collect management information. The call sequencer can provide management information such as:

- ✓ number of calls abandoned
- ✓ number of calls received
- ✓ number of calls processed
- ✓ length of calls
- ✓ who received calls (answered calls)

This is information of great value in determining the number of additional lines needed and what grade of service to provide.

**58.** *Recommendation:* Request the Department of General Services to re-examine the numbering system allocated to the Public Counter Room 460S. The intent is to have certain numbers - such as 485-7824 which is for internal use - to be discontinued and replaced because too many outside calls are received on this number.

Conduct a study to determine how many calls are actually misdirected to this location, including to which other location should they have been addressed.

Review with Department of General Services alternatives to directing all calls that appear to be "planning" related to this location. It is acknowledged that it is essential to have an intake number for the Planning Department and that is not practical for the City's Centrex and switchboard operators to screen calls in a detailed fashion. However, there is the potential of modifying the menu when people call City Information to offer additional options which would reduce the number of calls received at this location.

## **G. COMPUTER AUTOMATION**

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The methodology for the computer automation analysis consisted of interviews, observations, and review of various reports prepared both internally and by outside consultants. Included amongst the reports that we reviewed were:

- "A study to update the Integrated systems Plan and to evaluate current requirements for automatic systems for the City of Los Angeles Department of Planning," prepared by Maxima Data Systems (July 19, 1989);
- The "Automated Equipment Inventory Certification for the Department of City Planning," September 27, 1990; and
- "Technology in the City Planning Department. A presentation to Peer Review Panel - March 3, 1991" by Raymond Jantz, Division Manager, Administrative Services Division.

After reviewing all of these reports and conducting interviews and observations, it was apparent that the "Maxima Report" findings and recommendations provided a comprehensive review of the Department's existing and future technology, systems resources, and staffing requirements as perceived at that time. Several of the suggested recommendations have since been implemented by the Department. However, a "hiring and spending freeze" was put in place last year by the City Council on all Departments. Many of the high priority projects, such as G.I.S., have not received adequate funding and therefore, have been placed in a stationary freeze position until new funds are available. It is anticipated that no new funds will be allocated for fiscal year 1992 - 1993.

However, there are several options available for the Planning Department while this freeze is in place throughout the City. The first option would be to find some short-term low or no cost "fixes" for its computer automation needs over the next year. This "band-aid" approach is not the best solution for a City of this size and diversity. The second option is to take advantage of system developments in other City departments that are useful to Planning and for Planning to concentrate on improvements unique to the Department.



This section will provide a series of prioritized findings, recommendations and financing options for the computer automation environment in the Los Angeles Planning Department. Several of our findings will be consistent with the "Maxima Report." And finally, it is important to realize that we have identified only those recommendations that we feel have a high priority within the Department. These recommendations we believe should be addressed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Planning Department.

**Topic: Word Processing - IBM AS/400**

**Background:** The Planning Department recently approved the replacement of the IBM 5520 system with the IBM AS/400 system. The IBM 5520, which was used in the word processing center, was outdated and no longer received support by IBM or the City's Information System Department (ISD). The IBM AS/400 will serve as the standard word processing system for the Department, with the exception of the IBM System 36 which is being used as a word processor by the Community Planning Revision (CPR) Division. The system has been ordered and should be delivered to the City by June 1991. The System should be operational by August, 1991.

**59. - Recommendation:** Provide immediate resources from within the Systems and Mapping Division to install and provide an on schedule operational IBM AS/400 word processing environment. Cost of this recommendation will only be the staff time required.

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**Topic: Word Processing - IBM System 36**

**Background:** There is a need for an integrated office automation environment to allow for efficiency throughout the Planning Department. ISD recently evaluated several computers to be used as the standard computer for all City departments. IBM's AS/400 system was selected as the standard computer. Some of the important office automation functions that the IBM AS/400 system provide include: shared word processing environment, proofreading assistance, document management, electronic mailing and calendaring, windows, and distribution lists. The Planning Department has recently replaced the IBM 5520 with this system and have had discussions about replacing the IBM System 36 which is utilized for word processing by the Community Planning Division (CPR) Division. The system is located on the third floor of "The Park" at 221 S. Figueroa Office. The System 36 is used for limited word processing by technical staff in the CPR Division, and is not expandable to a full-office automation solution.

The locations of the Planning Department Divisions could create a physical problem for computer cabling throughout the various floors. These physical impediments might make it difficult for each of the Divisions to utilize the IBM AS/400 system as their primary word processing environment. Therefore, an alternative office automation solution has been identified as a recommendation.

**60.**     *Recommendation:* We recommend that the Planning Department replace the IBM System 36 with the most feasible and cost effective office automation solution. The Planning Department should first make an executive decision to replace the IBM System 36. The next step would be to identify adequate funding from the trade-in-allowance, developer fees, or general fund if available. The third step is for the Planning Department to determine which of the following solutions is most applicable to their environment. One solution is to replace the IBM System 36 with the IBM AS/400 system recently purchased by the Planning Department. This will allow for sufficient inter-connectivity and compatibility across the department. In addition, the Department will reduce and/or eliminate duplicate efforts in preparation of documents. The Planning Department has had initial discussions with IBM representatives regarding a trade-in-allowance for the IBM System 36. The second solution could be to identify locations within the Planning Department that are remotely removed from the IBM AS/400 and to purchase IBM PCs and create a local area network (LAN). These remote locations would still use an IBM office automation software package to allow for compatibility with outside Planning Department Divisions. These remote areas can also tie into the IBM AS/400 system through external/internal modems. This approach would be efficient and effective as long as the IBM AS/400 system is used primarily for office automation. The final step in this process would be to allocate staff resources to oversee the success of this replacement once funding is secured. Cost estimates for the first solution are difficult to ascertain until the IBM AS/400 Lease-Purchase contract is reviewed. Cost estimates for the second solution would range from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per computer for the purchase of hardware, DOS, and installation of the LAN.

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**Topic:     Bureau of Engineering Data Utilization**

*Background:* Over the past years the Planning Department has not had a strong working relationship with the City's Bureau of Engineering (BOE). Both departments have acted independently of each other during the development of various automated systems the past several years. This has created an environment that is not cost effective or efficient for the City of Los Angeles. The BOE currently has data that could improve cost controls and productivity for the Planning Department. Three (3) BOE data bases identified as a need for the Planning Department include ComputerVision maps, width of streets, and improvement of streets.



BOE has for several years been developing cadastral base maps for the City. Currently the City's Department of Water and Power use these maps for their needs. The Planning Department has recently obtained a workstation server and workstation for use in converting the BOE cadastral base maps to their ARC/INFO database as part of the Community Plan Review (CPR) Program. The data converted to the ARC/INFO database consists of graphic or spatial information used to prepared automated parcel-based maps. The Planning Department, through the CPR Program, will convert maps for each of its 35 community plans. Five communities are expected to be converted by June 1991.

It is important for the Planning Department to begin coordination of its automated mapping effort with BOE immediately. This is discussed in detail in the Systems and Mapping section.

The BOE has made steady progress toward automating its mapping effort. For example, BOE is completing a major project to digitize the entire City into a format that is expected to be used for automated map generation by July 1991. As this is most likely to occur, the Planning Department will need to coordinate with BOE to begin a conversion process.

**61.**     **Recommendation:** The Planning Department should pursue the development of a Joint Data Program with BOE which would provide an inter-departmental coordination process. It is suggested that the Joint Data Program meet on a monthly basis and consist of two members each from Planning and BOE. A fifth member from the City's ISD should be considered for planning and continuity amongst City systems.

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#### **Topic:   Personal Computer Allocation**

**Background:** An integral part of the Planning Department and its success is the ability to retrieve data. Technology plays an important role in the retrieval of data. Automated data has improved the timeliness and accuracy of various planning processes. The Planning Department currently does not have the adequate technology in place for the population that it services. Several reports have provided assistance in identifying the need for an increase in personal computers (PCs), terminals, and printers for the Planning Department.

An equipment inventory of the Planning Department was completed as of May 21, 1991. At that time, the Planning Department which consisted of approximately 300 employees, only had a total of 35 PCs. This provided a ratio of about one PC to every 9.5 employees.

Also included in the inventory were 73 CRTs. Combining these CRTs and PCs resulted in a total of 84 computer terminals, producing a ratio of one computer terminal (CRT or PC) to every 2.7 Planning Department employees.

A questionnaire was recently distributed to all Planning Department employees. The most reoccurring response throughout many different question was the need for more PCs and improved access to terminals. This response was identified in all Divisions of Planning and was provided by clerical through management level employees. It is clear to the employees that the Department could improve its productivity with additional equipment. Several employees have resorted to using their personally-owned PCs to complete their projects in a timely and efficient manner. This practice introduces concerns over the liability for the cost of repairs and replacement should they break down or get stolen.

As the Planning Department is moving steadily toward the use of computer-based information and eventually to processing cases using computers, it makes a great deal of sense to develop a computer-literate staff. This can only be successfully achieved when employees have ready access to computers and/or terminals and appropriate training.

The Department already has 73 CRTs and this number appears adequate. What is lacking are PCs which should be acquired. Ideally, the Department should have one PC for every employee whose job requires continual access to computer-based information. Generally, any employee whose assignment calls for about five hours of work to be done on a computer should have access to a terminal or PC. We recognize that PCs provide more versatility and flexibility than terminals. However, each job should be reviewed to determine the need for a terminal or PC.

**62.** *Recommendation:* Immediately prepare a Systems Strategy that thoroughly analyzes the Planning Department's needs requirements for PCs, terminals, and printers. This strategy should define the appropriate ratio of PCs and terminals required for each Division and the overall Department. The Strategy will define those Divisions and employees that require equipment to efficiently and effectively complete their responsibilities. Included within this Systems Strategy will be both short- and long-term solutions for a PC and computer terminal environment for all Divisions. Use of a consultant at an estimated cost of \$25,000 is recommended.

**63.** *Recommendation:* After completion of the Systems Strategy it is also recommended that the Planning Department resubmit the requisition order for an additional 40+ IBM PS/2 PCs. Each system would include a 60-megabyte hard drive, 2 megabytes of RAM, a keyboard and monitor. These



additional PCs would bring their total to over 160 for the Department. This would provide an improved ratio of almost one PC to every 1.5 staff members. Additional cost for the purchase of one IBM PS/2 PC is estimated at \$4,000 to \$7,000 depending on the type of environment (LAN or stand-alone).

**64. Recommendation:** A final recommendation is for the City to utilize the personally-owned computers and make it advantageous for both the City and the employees by providing modems at the homes of a selected number of individual employees. This would allow employees who work overtime to have the ability to tie-in with various Planning systems.

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**Topic: Socio-Economic Information System (SEIS)**

**Background:** The Socio-Economic Information System (SEIS) is being developed by the Planning Department to make basic demographic information available to staff from within the Planning Department and city-wide. A small prototype has been completed by Planning. The Systems and Mapping Division will provide a proposal by August 7, 1991 discussing the completion of the database. The System will operate on any of the 2,500+ host-connected terminals throughout the City.

Some of the data elements that will be part of the SEIS database include population and housing unit estimates (POPEST), population projections, data from LUPAMS, employment, income and other socio-economic data. The SEIS database will be one of the data sets that will integrate eventually into GIS.

**65. Recommendation:** Provide adequate resources to make SEIS operational. This may require the equivalent of 2 people for one year. (See also Research and Development discussion under Citywide Planning.)

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**Topic: Computer Training**

**Background:** In this age of rapid technological changes, training must receive top priority within all organizations. A policy or the implementation of a policy that provides computer training in the Planning Department appears to be lacking. Computer training programs can expand the usefulness of expensive computer equipment and if the training is documented, provide the Planning Department with valuable information regarding each employee's skill level which could be used in performance evaluations, job enrichment, reassignments, and promotions. For the Planning Department, it is critical to have proper training for the new systems and programs that are currently being installed or will be

operational in a short time frame (within one year). Some of the Systems and Mapping Division staff are currently receiving training in hand digitizing of radius maps and the GIS. The Department will need to immediately provide training on the IBM AS/400 system that should be installed and operational by August, 1991. In addition the Department should develop a training program for use of the BOE's GIS functions (see Topic: Department Information System Strategy).

The Planning Department staff recently received a questionnaire that discussed formal and informal training received or not received in the Department. One of the overwhelming responses was the desire to be trained on computers and specific planning related software packages. Some of the repetitive comments that were made are as follows:

- Provide software training to all employees on a rotating basis;
- Ongoing training for staff of newly purchased technology should be a requirement; and
- Train professional and support staff in software graphics applications.

Computer training and development were not identified in the Planning Departments budget. Because the funds for training are "buried" in the budget in one of the expense item, it is not clear whether adequate financial resources exist to support a sufficient computer training program in the Planning Department. Computer training should be a high priority on management's list of staff development programs.

**66. Recommendation:** Prepare a comprehensive computer training program which will provide formal training of the Planning Department's hardware and software for appropriate staff and management.

A highly visible training program needs to be developed and implemented that will encourage employees to take advantage of the available training. The following recommendations are advised for a successful program:

- Allocate a part-time computer training officer to the Planning Department, estimated annual cost of \$80,000.
- Establish a central record of training and education completed by staff for use as a skills inventory, as a measure of success in achieving organizational training objectives, and as a statistical resource.
- Develop and update training objectives on an annual basis.
- Explore the possibility of joint training programs between city departments, Planning Divisions, sections, or functions.



- Conduct cross-training in the Planning Divisions.
- Provide orientation and on-the-job training for new employees.
- Conduct an on-going needs assessment of training requirements, specifically with changing technology.
- Create a separate line item in budget for staff development and training.

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**Topic: Systems RFP Development**

**Background:** The participation of several key decision-makers representing various City departments is often required when making strategic organization choices. The Planning Department's System and Mapping Division employees are key decision-makers because of the important planning systems that are developed or used by their staff.

It is our finding that the GIS Section of the Systems and Mapping Division has been left out of the program conception, which often times is prior to the Request for Proposal (RFP) phase of a contracted out system. The GIS Section does not have adequate lead time to prepare or plan for most of these events because they are not part of this program conception phase. The GIS Section normally does not get to review RFPs until after bids are received for the proposal evaluation and vendor selection phase. It would seem logical that the GIS Section or other members of the Systems and Mapping Division should provide technical input during the program conception and RFP development phases. If the Planning Department will be a user of the proposed system, then their input is as critical as it is for other user departments.

There appears to be no centralized Planning Department policies and procedures for systems RFPs that are enforced. RFPs within Planning are prepared by a variety of persons and divisions. Each division will often times develop their own RFPs and not include the Systems and Mapping Division employees at the proper times for this process. A Planning Department management and contracting group has been created to monitor and assist in the development of RFPs and its success rate has been difficult to measure due to the hiring and funding freeze.

**67. Recommendation:** Re-evaluate the management and contracting group to ensure that one management employee or senior analyst from the Systems and Mapping Division becomes an active participant. There is no cost for this recommendation, only a commitment of an estimated two to four hours per month of staff time.

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**Topic: Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

**Background:** A very thorough Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Requirements Analysis for the Planning Department was developed by Maxima Data Systems in a report dated July 19, 1989. The report provided a description of the GIS development as provided by the City of Los Angeles GIMS Master Plan and the objectives of the Planning Department. A description of the future GIS requirements for the Planning Department and alternative systems configurations were identified in this report.

Based on this requirements analysis, the Planning Department has begun purchasing appropriate hardware and software. The ARC/INFO GIS is the Department's software that provides the analysis, compilation, establishment, update, and dissemination of geographically referenced information. The ARC/INFO resource will provide automated generation of cartographic products (maps) and management of large data sets. ARC/INFO is centrally controlled by the PRIME 4450 minicomputer, running the PRIMOS operating system. The system is connected to the City's Central Host Computer which allows for on-line, menu-driven access to the following land use database files:

- Geographic Reference File;
- Socio-Economic Information System;
- Automated Case Tracking System; and
- Land Use Planning and Management System.

The system is located in Room 561-E of City Hall. The computer is also equipped with two dedicated terminals and a 300-lines per minute line printer. Monthly and quarterly back-up tapes are stored at a remote off-site location. It is our finding that the Planning Department lacks a centralized area for computer equipment. In addition, the current computer room does not have adequate space for existing and/or future hardware. The quarters are cramped and poorly designed for accessing the equipment.

The following status report of GIS was prepared by the Planning Department in March 1991:

**Production:** The GIS Staff involved with product delivery generate the department's Community District General Plan Maps, and other geographic and demographic integrated analysis maps and reports by manipulating the existing database, and writing specific application programs to produce the final outputs. In addition, there are products that cannot be created solely from the existing database information. Production of certain ordinance maps detailing General Plan amendments, zone changes, height district changes, etc., involve data input, conversion, coordinate, editing and refinement.



**Research and Development/Database Management:** The GIS staff involved with database management, and research and development are responsible for database update and maintenance to ensure data integrity and quality control. Their duties also encompass the anticipation of the department's future needs in terms of automation, upkeep of the current computer operating environment, and intensive programming to further automate the department's functions.

Since the preparation of the GIS Requirements Analysis in 1989, the System and Mapping Division have had an authorized increase of four GIS staff positions. This is the anticipated increase of GIS staffing as outlined in the GIS Requirements Analysis. The authorized Fiscal Year 1990-91 staffing for GIS was 25 positions. Five of those positions are vacant and due to the imposed hiring and spending freeze these vacated positions cannot be routinely filled. The vacant positions, coupled with the management and political prioritization of projects (i.e., balanced growth issue), has made it difficult to develop and expand the GIS environment. For example the GIS Technical Section is working to develop a parcel-based GIS. Currently, graphical data exists at the block level. A parcel-based system combines graphical information used to prepare maps and tabular information which is text data. Currently, two of 35 communities have the graphical data prepared and are operational on the ARC/INFO System. It is anticipated that a total of five communities will have been converted after a two year period. Original estimates were to convert five communities each year for a total of seven years to complete the project. Because of lack of resources (staffing, equipment, and funding) this process will take approximately 14 years to complete. Once the system is fully operational it will provide substantial benefits to all divisions of the Planning Department.

**Note:** For recommendations on this topic see the Systems and Mapping Division section on Information Systems Planning.

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**Topic: Automated Case Tracking System (ACTS)**

**Background:** The Planning Department processes over 5,000 discretionary permit cases per year. In order to effectively handle this work load, an Automated Case Tracking System (ACTS) was implemented in 1987 to provide for a computerized update and retrieval of case file information anywhere in the Planning Department. The system tracks cases processed by the Zoning Administration, City Planning Commission, parcel maps and subdivisions, and Periodic Plan Review cases. The ACTS is written in the 4GL DRE software and resides in the Information Systems Department's (CIS) mainframe computer (IBM 3090). Access is

through a TSO terminal with limited access to the ISD mainframe. The data are accessible to anyone in the City with a TSO terminal and the BOE, Building and Safety Department, and City Council routinely use the system.

A review of ACTS for the Planning Department was performed by Maxima Data Systems in a report dated July 19, 1989. The report provides a description of the development of the case tracking system and the goals expected to be achieved. Limitations of the system were discussed. Based on the results of these reports and our interviews and observation of the system in use, we offer the following comments.

ACTS was developed using INQUIRE software and operates on the City's IBM mainframe. As such it is a shared system allowing access through any TSO terminal in the Department and throughout the City. It is estimated that some 2500 terminals can potentially access ACTS. Case data has been entered into the system since 1987 and currently contains records for about 16,000 cases. Growth is expected to increase by about 5,000 cases per year. Pre 1987 case data is not on file and is available from manual sources (microfiche and hard copy material). There are no plans to automate these prior case files.

There are significant limitations to ACTS ever becoming a useful case tracking system. Each of these limitations are discussed individually:

**Data Retrieval.** Users of ACTS report that the system is at times slow in responding to queries, including inability to access because it is "busy". This condition encourages the use of a manual system based on cards to track cases and retrieval data. As more case data is entered into the system, it is expected that this situation will worsen rather than improve.

**68. Recommendation:** A long term solution for improving data retrieval is for the acquisition of more hardware by the City's ISD or the Planning Department. A preferable solution however, is the creation of a new system as outlined in Recommendation 71 in which case ACTS could be abandoned.

**Textual Processing.** INQUIRE software was selected because it was represented as having a sophisticated textual processing capability. Case records provide for a limited area to enter textual data into the "General Comments" section of the record. Further, text and graphics have not been integrated resulting in text and maps being separated. Additional hardware was considered by the Department but not purchased. This situation results in the need for the actual case file to be "in hand" and continued reliance on the manual card system.



**69.** *Recommendation:* The "general comments" area of the case record should be expanded to allow for increased textual output. This could be accomplished by reformatting the fields in the record to provide for historical data which would establish an on-line chronology of case activities. A preferable solution however, is the creation of a new system outlined in Recommendation 71.

**ACTS Management.** Data input is performed by each user unit in the Planning Department. There continues to be a lack of "ownership" of the system resulting in a non-uniform set of instructions that are followed by each unit to update case data. Data input is performed by clerical staff having varying priorities and approaches. Lack of routine, timely, and uniform data input allows for the reliability of data to be questioned. In addition, there is lack of consistency in entering data relating to BOOK/PAGE/PARCEL (available from the Assessor's LUPAMS System). This is a serious lapse in data input as this information will eventually be used to link the ACT System with other land use automated systems.

**70.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Department should designate a unit within the department to be responsible for the functioning of the ACT System. Such responsibility should extend to the following areas:

- Data entry - enforce data entry consistency, especially in key fields (BOOK/PAGE/PAR-CEL).
- Training - assure all clerical staff are trained concerning processing information, queries, and data entry.
- Database management - provide for periodic workload reporting to assist Department management in budgeting, work planning, etc.
- Management information - provide for periodic workload reporting to assist Department management in budgeting, work planning, etc.

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**Topic: Permit Processing Systems**

**Background:** In order to determine the feasibility of reducing development implementation and costs, we have made a high level review of permit processing systems used by other public agencies. Our general observation is that, while there are indeed automated permit and case systems developed by various vendors and in use by other public agencies, the City of Los Angeles' characteristics constrain their application. This is to say, the governmental structure of the City has a significant impact on the ease of adapting typical "off-the-shelf" systems. Further, and certainly

more important to our review, is the huge database that must be maintained and accessed in the City's environment. Given the large amount of data to be manipulated in an interactive mode to render an automated case processing system beneficial for the user requires the power of mainframe hardware and system. "Off-the-shelf" systems typically operate in a PC-based or mini-computer environment and are appropriate for small jurisdictions.

The larger public agencies have not successfully implemented these "off-the-shelf" programs. As a rule, they have developed their own in-house applications or with the assistance of consultants. The City, therefore, has taken the appropriate approach of developing automated systems to be operated on the City's Host Computer (CHC) which has the sufficient power to handle a large database.

**Sierra's PERMITS.** A popular Geo-based/Land Management and Permit Information tracking system used by over 75 jurisdictions throughout the United States is distributed by Sierra Computer Systems, Inc., (Sierra). This software program operates on a Hewlett Packard 3000 computer. While it can handle a fairly large database, it would not be able to function in the City's enormous database requirements.

We note, however, that the City's Building and Safety Department has issued an RFP for the design and development of an automated Permit and Construction Inspection System (PCIS). Out of the vendors included in the selected consultant team is Sierra. As Sierra is an activity tracking software program, the City will be availing itself of the technology and methodologies developed by this firm.

**Automated Permit and Construction Inspection System (PCIS).** Approximately one and a half years ago, the Building and Safety Department issued an RFP for the design and implementation of an Automated Permit and Construction Inspection System (PCIS). A consulting team was selected by the Department last November. However, due to the City's budget crisis, no award has been made to date due to lack of funding. However, financing alternatives are being investigated in order to undertake this project.

The estimated cost is approximately \$12 million over three years to implement the system. The cost breakdown is about \$6 million for consultants and equipment plus a comparable amount (about \$6 million) for in-house support to the program.

The proposed PCIS is an integrated system which will automate the processing of building permits through the City's review and approval process and the tracking of building inspection activities. At the end of the process, the system will have the capability of creating an automated



certificate of occupancy. A major product of the PCIS will be a City-wide inventory of building facilities indicating their property uses. This information will detail such data as uses in buildings by floor, number of occupants, fire safety conditions, special use approvals, etc. This information will be a valuable database, provided in tabular form, which will indicate various characteristics of use of importance to the Department of Building and Safety, but also to Planning, Police, Fire, and City Clerk (permits and licenses).

The PCIS will interface with the BOE's GIS. It is intended that the data now manually inserted on BOE's base maps showing such things as street designations, special hazards, Council districts, census tract, grading ordinance requirements, zoning special conditions, etc., would be accomplished in an electronic environment thereby eliminating the manual processes.

PCIS is being designed to interface with the County's LUPAMS system in order to obtain property data from that source. We note that PCIS will have the capability of retrieving property data by inquiry of any one of the following:

- Address
- Legal description
- Assessor parcel number
- Graphic coordinates

As a result, it will become the only property data in use by the City to access property data using various property identifiers.

PCIS will also interface with the Planning Department's Automated Case Tracking System (ACTS). This will be particularly important when certain building permits to be issued by the Department of Building and Safety require the review and approval of the Planning Department. PCIS, through the ACTS interface, will be able to track the Planning Department's process and to monitor and update electronically the progress of permit/case review and approval activities. Using an interdepartmentally-approved protocol, the Planning Department will have the capability of electronically "signing off" on a permit/case thereby eliminating paper work.

What we feel is most important to the Planning Department regarding the upcoming implementation of PCIS is the City-wide ability to view on a screen, all permit applications and where they are in the process of being reviewed. Through the interface with ACTS, case applications and progress will also be accessible in a similar fashion. It is hopeful to observe that an interactive environment is envisioned which will allow for various departments to record, update, correct, and complete permit/case tracking data thereby creating a fully automated system.

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It is significant to also observe that the Building and Safety Department expects to have full access into the BOE's GIS. This clearly suggests to us that the BOE's GIS will be City's land use GIS resource.

**Orange County's - PARIS.** The integrated Planning and Regulation Information System (PARIS) in Orange County is a proprietary software system designed by Atkisson and Associates, Inc. which manages the information processing activities in small- to very large-scale property development environments. The PARIS software has been designed as a series of integrated but separable application modules which can be tailored to provide for the most basic application functions to the most sophisticated integrated information system. It may be used in common by a wide variety of property-related agencies and jurisdictions or by a single department. For example, a component of the PARIS software can be installed to satisfy a single function (such as initiation and recording of permit data), or a multi-agency system allowing users to share common information from initiation of an application through final disposition may be implemented by using the PARIS integration features.

The PARIS software is divided into four major subsystems: The Application Management System (AMS), the Land Use System (LUS), the Regulation Information System (RIS), and the Permit Tracking System (PTS). Each of these four major subsystems is composed of a number of unique but interrelated applications or functions which, when operating together, form the basis of integration.

In all, the PARIS software design represents a comprehensive approach to the automation of planning and regulation activities. It is designed to serve the needs of planning; building and safety (regulation); surveyor; inspection and, perhaps most importantly, the public. The PARIS software is not an off-the-shelf, turnkey package, but rather it was designed with flexibility in mind. As a consequence, each PARIS software installation requires a certain degree of tailoring to custom fit the software to the individual user's requirements. The design is such that facilities which are not present in the basic design may be added during this tailoring process without impacting the functionality of the remainder of the system.

The PARIS software is designed to operate on IBM/370 architecture-based systems, from the IBM 9370 through the 3090. It will perform under VSE or MVS operating system environments and requires the use of the IBM CICS communications monitor. DATACOM/DB, a Computer Associates Inc. relational database management product is also required. Future releases of PARIS will feature the use of IBM DB2 and other popular DBMS products. The City of Los Angeles should review PARIS because of its strengths, flexibility and size.

71. *Recommendation:* It is becoming obvious that the Building and Safety Department will find a solution to their funding problem and be able to proceed with PCIS. It is even more certain that the BOE will be able to continue funding their GIS improvements currently underway. We cannot be as optimistic for the Planning Department to be able to fund programs that would not be integrated into the information systems scheme described earlier. We therefore conclude and recommend that the Planning Department's most beneficial strategy consists of the following elements:

Immediately open discussions with the Building and Safety Department to gain a complete understanding of the proposed PCIS and negotiate with that Department the inclusion in PCIS of elements that would benefit Planning. The added costs to the Planning Department to augment the Building and Safety Department's PCIS efforts and tie them into the Planning Department's needs are estimated at \$2.5 to \$3.0 million. This amount is a rough estimate since PCIS is not yet started, but appears to be consistent with costs others have experienced.

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**Topic: Department Information System Strategy**

*Background:* There are several significant activities taking place in the City departments having an impact on the Planning Department. We have reviewed earlier in this report the BOE's progress toward upgrading and completing their GIS, the upcoming PCIS, and TAPS. Each of these activities will produce information systems of value to Planning. Making use and having access to these systems should be a primary consideration for Planning. As these systems will be interfaced or operate on the City Host Computer (CHC), the matter of access into the database should not be an issue other than developing the physical capability of having enough terminals.

What we believe is a more serious concern is the Planning Department channelling its energy and resources to the development and implementation of systems not currently contemplated elsewhere. This does not appear to have been the case for some prior departmental decisions (i.e., GIS) and the result has been the diversion of effort and money to a program unlikely to be completed or to have the value and utility desired. In order to address where best the Planning Department's focus should be, we discuss on the following pages what appears to be City-wide directions that affect the Department.

The City is moving toward integrating all land use planning and development processes into a single automated system. To derive the maximum benefits, the automation would integrate all the tasks associated with land use and construction activity now performed by those City departments represented in the Construction Services Center. These departments are:



- Department of Building and Safety
- Department of City Planning
- City Engineer
- Fire Department
- Department of Transportation
- City Clerk Land Records

The dynamic nature of real estate and of zoning and building inspection functions makes the work of the above departments labor and paper intensive. Most applications are manual and control over data flow and verification are virtually absent. It requires the interchange of information on an expedient basis if construction plans and building inspections are to proceed within a reasonable time frame.

The proposed systems (BOE's GIS, Building and Safety's PCIS, Planning's ACTS) would, when interfaced together, integrate the discretionary permitting process (City Planning) and construction permit and inspection system (Building and Safety) and capture in a centralized database all information necessary to review and approve such permits and inspect land development projects. A major benefit would be to bring together land development, building permit, zoning conformity application, and GIS information which currently resides in various incompatible manual and computer-based files into one system. All users of the information would use and update the same database. This would eliminate duplicate maintenance of this information, the need for the retention of separate files, and the potential for errors.

The various pieces to this integrated database will reside on the City's Central Host Computer and be developed in conformance to the City's long-range integrated System Plan and "Department of Information Services Standards and Guidelines." This would allow for the proposed systems to effectively communicate with other departmental computers and microcomputers under IBM's System Network Architecture (SNA).

The missing element in this movement toward a City-wide land use database is the absence of a coordinating process to bring it together. That is to say, we have not identified a centrally unifying process whereby the key departments involved have allocated who has responsibility to design and implement these large information systems.

We are concerned that a continued lack of interdepartmental coordination will result in significant data not being captured and made accessible to the users. Refer to "Section C - Bureau of Engineering Data Utilization" of this report which discusses this issue in further detail. Therefore, we strongly urge that the City's affected departments join together in their common effort through the creation of a Coordinating Steering Committee.

- Department of Building and Safety
- Department of City Planning
- City Engineer
- Fire Department
- Department of Transportation
- City Clerk Land Records

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**72.** *Recommendation:* Create a Coordinating Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the Planning Department, BOE, Building and Safety Department, and ISD whose mission it will be to:

- Assure that City-wide systems development involving land use and property data are coordinated and of utility to all affected departments.
- Assure that individual department efforts to automate and expand land use and property information systems complement one another.

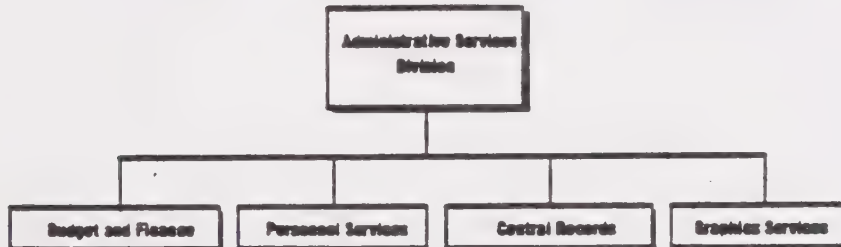


## IV. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

### OVERVIEW

The Administrative Services Division provides internal support functions for the Planning Department's line divisions and work units. As shown in the figure below, the Administrative Services Division is responsible for Budget and Finance, Personnel Services, Central Records, and Graphics Services.

**Figure 4  
Organization**



As shown in Table 5 below, the Administrative Services staff has increased 13% during the last four years to accommodate the increased workload that has accompanied the Department's expanded staffing.

**Table 5  
Administrative Services Staffing Trends**

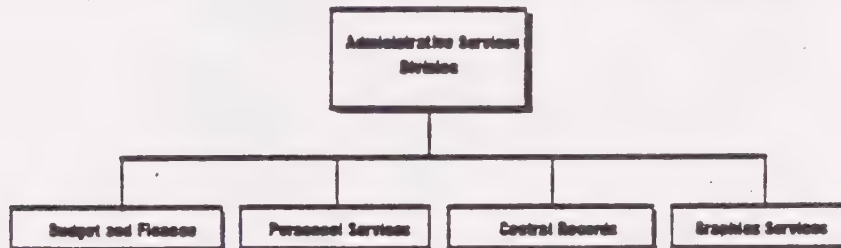
	1990		1989		1988		1987	
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled
Secretary	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Clerk	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Senior Clerk	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
Principal Clerk	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
Account Clerk I	1	1	1	1	--	--	--	--
Account Clerk II	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1
Chief Clerk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Clerk Typist	11	10	11	11	11	11	11	10
Sr. Clerk Typist	11	11	11	11	10	10	10	8
Accountant I	1	1	1	1	--	--	--	--
Sr. Accountant II	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Graphic Des. I	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Graphic Des. II	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Personnel Office	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Photographer 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cartographer	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	4
Graphics Supervisor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Personnel Analyst I	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Personnel Analyst II	1	1	1	1	--	--	--	--
Management Analyst I	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Management Analyst II	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	1
Sr. Management Analyst I	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sr. Management Analyst II	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Chief Management Analyst	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	60	56	59	57	53	50	53	47

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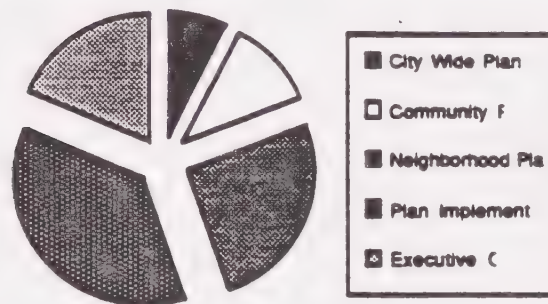
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Principal Clerk	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
Account Clerk I	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—
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Photographer I	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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Graphics Supervisor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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Personnel Analyst II	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—
Management Analyst I	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Management Analyst II	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	1
Sr. Management Analyst I	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sr. Management Analyst II	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chief Management Analyst	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	60	56	59	57	53	50	53	47





- Graphics Services Section employs 11 professional staff and is responsible for the design and development of the Department's print material, graphics and audio-visual aids. This section also provides photography services for other City Departments.

**Figure 6**  
**Graphics Section Workload Distribution**



As shown in Figure 6 above, during Fiscal Year 1989-90, this section completed 611 work orders, of which, 37% were for Plan Implementation, 27% for Neighborhood Planning, 14% for Executive Offices which includes other City-department requests, 8% City Wide, and 11% for Community Plan review sections. In addition to the graphics services, the section processed 144 work order requests for photography. This photographer provides services for both the Department and other City organizational units.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Topic: Personnel – Staff Growth, Vacancy and Turnover**

**Background:** As shown in Table 8 and summarized in Figure 7 below, the Department's authorized and actual staffing level has increased 38% and 33% respectively during the last five years. On a proportional basis, this has been one of the fastest growing City Departments. As shown in Figure 7 below, the growth in staffing occurred primarily from 1988-1990. However, the effects of that growth are still being felt by the organization in terms of the creation of new classifications and new positions, reclassification of existing positions and staff, internal reorganization and realignments, physical movement and relocation of work space and promotion of staff.



- Personnel section, located on the seventh floor of City Hall, is responsible for working with the City's Central Personnel Department in developing a classification and compensation system for the Department's employees and in recruiting, training, developing and evaluating the staff. The section currently employs three professionals and one clerical staff. As shown in Table 6 below, this Section's workload, after increasing rather dramatically in 1986-1988, has declined and remained relatively constant during the last two years.

**Table 6**  
**Staffing Trends**

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
# of Authorized Staff	368	382	409
New Hires	129	42	42
Promo Into Dept	2	12	8
Promo Out of Dept	26	45	45
Transfer Into Dept	15	17	18

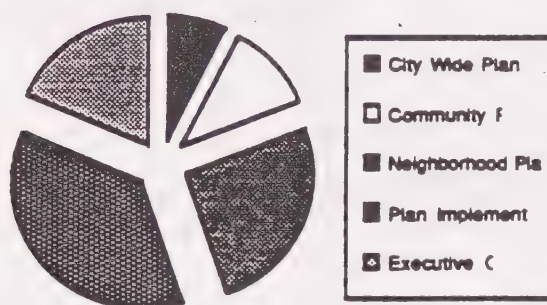
- Budget and Finance, located on the seventh Floor of City Hall, is responsible for working with the Department's divisions in preparing and administering the Department's budget. In addition, this section processes the purchase order and central store requisitions for goods and services and performs analytical and support services as required by the Department's management. At present, the purchasing function is staffed by a part-time employee. Our analysis of processing time for central stores requisitions revealed that the typical requisition is filled within 7 working days, which is acceptable in an organization of this size. This section currently employs 8 professionals and 7 clerical staff members.
- The Records and Word Processing unit, located on the Fifth Floor of City Hall, is responsible for staffing and operating the filing, storage and retrieval of all records, maps and publications. Also, this section staffs the Department's Central Word Processing Center and reproduction facilities. As shown in Figure 5 below, the records workload has remained relatively constant during the last several years while the CWPC workload has increased 15% during the last year.

**Figure 5**  
**Central Records Work Load**



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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

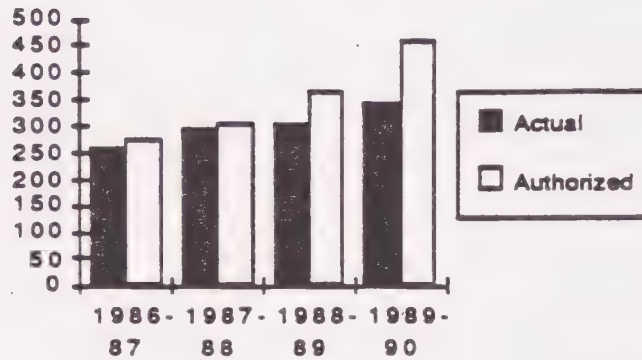
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**Figure 7**  
**Number of Positions**



As would be expected given the nature of service, a significant growth occurred in the number of professional staff, as shown in the table below.

**Table 7**  
**Professional Staffing Levels**

Classification	FY 1986-87	FY 1987-88	FY 1988-89	FY 1989-90	FY 1990-91
Planning Assistant	31	44	45	44	46
City Planning Associate	56	84	83	84	86
City Planner	39	44	44	44	43
Senior City Planner	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u><b>134</b></u>	<u><b>152</b></u>	<u><b>185</b></u>	<u><b>184</b></u>	<u><b>187</b></u>



**Table 8**  
**Los Angeles Planning Department**  
**Authorized Positions, Fiscal Year 1989-90**

Class	FY 1986	FY 1987	FY 1988	FY 1989	FY 1990
Accountant I	-	-	1	1	1
Accounting Clerk I	-	-	-	1	1
Accounting Clerk II	2	2	2	2	2
Arch. Assoc. I	-	-	-	1	1
Assoc. Zoning Admin.	10	10	9	9	10
Cartographer	19	26	16	16	16
Chief Clerk	1	1	1	1	1
Chief Mgmt. Analyst	1	1	1	1	1
Chief Zoning Admin.	1	1	1	1	1
City Planner	31	36	44	45	46
City Planning Assoc.	56	66	84	83	86
City Planning Officer	1	1	1	-	-
Clerk	3	3	3	3	2
Clerk Stenographer	2	2	2	2	2
Clerk Typist	27	27	33	31	34
Common. Ex. Assist. I	1	1	1	1	1
Common. Ex. Assist. II	1	1	1	1	1
Computer Operator	-	-	1	-	-
Data Process. Tech I	-	-	1	-	-
Dept. Pers. Off. II	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy Dir. of Plng.	1	3	3	3	3
Director of Plng.	1	1	1	1	1
Drafting Aide	8	3	1	1	1
Envir. Assoc. II	-	-	2	2	2
Ex. Secretary II	1	3	3	3	3
Ex. Secretary III	1	1	1	1	1
Geo. Inf. Sys. Spec.	-	-	15	14	19
Geo. Inf. Sys. Sup. I	-	-	3	3	4
Geo. Info. Sys. Sup. II	-	-	1	1	2
Graphics Des. II	3	3	3	3	3
Graphics Des. III	1	1	2	2	2
Graphics Suprv. II	1	1	1	1	1
Land. Arch. Assoc. II	-	-	1	1	1
Mgmt Analyst I	1	2	2	2	2
Mgmt Analyst II	-	-	1	3	3
Mgmt. Assistant	-	-	1	1	1
O & S. Resrch. An. I	-	-	1	1	2
O & S Resrch An. II	1	1	1	1	2
Personnel An. I	1	1	1	1	1
Personnel An. II	-	-	-	1	1
Photographer I	1	1	1	1	1
Planning Aide II	-	-	-	-	5
Planning Assistant	39	41	44	44	43
Planning Economist	-	-	-	1	1
Pr. Cartographer	-	1	3	1	1
Pr. City Planner	2	2	3	5	4
Pr. Clerk	2	2	2	2	2
Project Assistant	-	-	-	1	-
Secretary	5	5	6	6	6
Sr. Accountant II	1	1	1	1	1
Sr. Cartographer	4	5	3	3	3
Sr. City Planner	8	9	12	13	12
Sr. Clerk	4	4	4	3	5
Sr. Clerk Typist	18	18	19	25	27
Sr. Mgmt Analyst I	1	1	1	1	1
Sr. Syst. Analyst I	-	1	3	3	3
Sr. Syst. Analyst II	-	-	1	1	1
Student Prof. Wrkr	4	9	10	17	17
Student Worker	1	1	1	1	1
Systems Analyst I	-	-	1	2	1
Systems Analyst II	2	2	4	4	5
Transp. Plng Assoc. II	-	-	1	-	-
Urb. Design Planner	-	-	-	-	1
Urb. Res. Analyst II	-	-	-	-	1
Urb. Res. Assoc. II	1	1	1	1	-
Urb. Res. Assoc. III	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>404</b>

In addition to the growth in the number of professional staff during the last five years, our analysis indicates that during the last three years there has been significant turnover of staff in these authorized positions, as shown in the table below.

**Table 9**  
**Staffing Trends**

Classification	% New Appointments		
	FY 1988-89	FY 1989-90	FY 1990-91
Planning Assistant	9	57	53
City Planning Associate	1	37	36
City Planner	25	22	15
Senior City Planner	42	8	25

Each of these professional classes, which account for 55% of the Department's total staff, has experienced at least a 60% turnover of personnel during the last three years. Most of the turnover is due to internal promotions caused by staff advancement within the organization.

**73.** *Recommendation:* The Department's personnel office conducts an exit interview with each employee terminating their employment. The results of those exit interviews should be submitted in a written report to the Department head along with recommendations for changes that may be required to address any issues raised by the employees. The implementation of this recommendation should improve communication and interaction between management and staff.

**Topic: Classification, Compensation and Accountability**

**Background:** The Planning Department provides technically skilled and labor-intensive services to its clients and constituents. The majority of its staff, approximately 80%, are skilled professionals that hold a minimum of a 4-year college degree. Many, particularly those that promote beyond the entry level class (Planning Assistant), possess a Master's Degree in their respective areas and/or many years of related work experience. It is a fair characterization to summarize the Planning Department's function as a white collar work unit whose work program is intended to provide technical insight and leadership to the City's elected officials in mapping the future of the City.

The City of Los Angeles, by both Charter and policy, has established and maintains a level of compensation for its professional staff that is comparable to private industry. As shown in the table below, the salary levels for professional planning staff are significant by any means and comparable to compensation paid to most positions requiring similar education and experience in other government institutions. In comparison



to economic data for the Southern California area, the salary for City Planner position is above the average for individuals with similar education and experience in other industries.

**Table 10**  
**Compensation Levels**

Class Title	Yrs Exper. in Class	Total Yrs. Experience	Annual Salary
Planning Assistant	0	+0	33,993 — 42,240
City Planning Associate	2	+2	39,992 — 49,632
City Planner	2	+4	47,062 — 58,506
Senior City Planner	2/4*	+6	55,478 — 68,904
Associate Zoning Administrator	2/4*	+8	63,287 — 78,613
Principal City Planner	2	+10	66,565 — 82,705
Chief Zoning Administrator	3	+11	70,324 — 87,362
Deputy Director of Planning	3	**	76,253 — 94,753
Director of Planning	3	***	110,894 — 166,330

- \* Alternative qualification in the class below.
- \*\* Cumulative experience if Associate Zoning Administrator = 11;  
If Principal City Planner or Chief Zoning Administrator = 13
- \*\*\* Add 3 to each option in \*\*, above (14 and 16, respectively).

We support the City's compensation policy as an essential element in the recruitment, retention and development of a qualified staff. However, our analysis of the duties and responsibilities that have evolved over the years for the different classes and positions within the Planning Department appears to be inconsistent with the intent of this compensation policy. For example, the City Planning Associate is a journeyman level position in the Department. As shown in Table 8 this is currently the single largest class in the Department. Incumbents in this class hold at least a college degree and/or two years of work related experience. Many hold a Master's degree and at least two years of professional, on-the-job experience. Our review of the operations of many of the work units indicated that the City Planning Associate positions are quite limited in assigned responsibilities and perform relatively low-level functions. Moreover, there is very little distinction made in assignment of duties between Planning Assistant, which is the entry-level position, and City Planning Associate.

Similarly, the City Planner position, which is the first line supervisor and thus the backbone of the Department's management, is treated inconsistently throughout the organization. The span of control for most City Planner positions is 1:3 and there are a number of City Planner positions that have no supervisory responsibilities. Moreover, in some sections incumbents in City Planner classification conduct hearings, while in others those responsibilities are assigned to Senior City Planners and Associate Zoning Administrators. Similar examples of inconsistencies in job duties and responsibilities exist for the Senior Planner and Associate Zoning Administrator positions.

**74.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Department management should examine the duties and responsibilities of the various positions and assess the appropriateness of their current classification and compensation schedule. It is clear that, as the Department has expanded, there has been both lowered expectation of performance for individuals, particularly those at the entry levels — Planning Assistant, City Planning Associate, and City Planner — and the assumption of those duties by higher paid management personnel. It is important to note that it appears, based on our review, that the lowered expectations stem not from line employees' inability to perform assigned duties but rather from a lack of proper direction and feedback from management (City Planner, Senior City Planner, and Principal Planner) in completing the assigned work. This issue is discussed further below. Evaluating the job duties and responsibilities for the various positions and adhering to their performance will significantly enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Department.

The Planning Assistant and City Planning Associate should be merged into a single classification with pay grades. The new classification would be City Planner Assistant I & II. Individuals holding status in this class should be responsible for conducting research, writing reports, and formulating conclusions on assigned tasks.

The City Planner position is a supervisory position. The desirable span of control for the first line supervisor should be established at 1:4 minimum threshold.

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**Topic: Management Classification, Levels of Accountability, Responsibility and Compensation**

*Background:* As previously discussed, the Department currently has three levels of management (Senior City Planner, AZA and Principal Planner) between the first line supervisor — City Planner classification — and the Deputy Director position. The Principal Planner is a division head position and is considered an executive level position within the Department. The Principal Planner position is currently providing direct supervision to the Senior City Planner classification. The average span of control for a Principal Planner is 1:3, which is narrow, given the level of education and experience of the Senior City Planner classification.

The AZA classification is a senior level position that requires 8 years of experience and is a non-supervisory classification. The compensation level for this position is 5% below the Principal Planner classification. Due to the narrow scope of responsibility and the high level of compensation, the AZA position is a highly competitive appointment within the Department. During our interview and noted throughout the employee questionnaire, the AZA is considered by many to be the most desirable position within the Department and as a result is viewed as having the most talented professionals.



The Senior City Planner is a mid-management position composed of individuals who have at least 6 years of professional experience. The span of control for most Senior City Planners is 1:3, which is narrow given the education and experience level of the City Planner position. The salary range for the Senior City Planner, which is a supervisory classification, is approximately 15% below that assigned to the non-supervisory AZA classification.

Our review noted there is a proliferation of management positions and sub-optimization of management-level skills and experience throughout the organization. The current span of control for managers (City Planners, Senior City Planners and Principal Planners) is too narrow. Moreover, the non-supervisory duties and responsibilities of the AZA are unnecessary, expensive and robs the Department of needed talent and expertise. Moreover, the use of AZA within the Department is inconsistent. Two AZA positions, one assigned to the Division of Land and the other to Plan Implementation have supervisory responsibilities for the City Planners assigned to their respective units. Moreover, the primary distinction between the Senior City Planner and AZA, aside from years of experience, is that the AZA is deputized and thus is authorized to conduct hearings pertaining to Zone Variances. In all other matters, the Senior City Planner is used interchangeably with the AZA.

**75.** *Recommendation:* The Senior City Planner and Associate Zoning Administrator classifications should be consolidated and reclassified as Chief City Planners. The new classification would be a supervisory class and established at a pay grade using the current salary schedules for the AZA and Senior City Planner classifications. The assignment to positions within pay grade would be based on level of the position and level of experience of the individual.

**76.** *Recommendation:* Minimum span of controls should be adopted for each management classification within the Department. The span of control for City Planners, Chief City Planners and Principal Planners positions should be increased to a ratio ranging between 1:5 to 1:8 depending upon the function. Broadening the span of control for all supervisory positions will require managers to delegate lower level duties they have assumed over the last several years due to the expansion and turnover of staff. The delegation of duties and responsibilities and greater empowerment of first line managers and staff is consistent with current trends in organization theory and management trends. More important, improved utilization of the Department's management skills and expertise, particularly with regard to the AZA, is essential to its efforts to control current cost of service and address the need for increased planning expertise and skills. This recommendation phased in over a number of years could result in an annual cost savings of \$400,000.

**Topic: Work Schedules**

**Background:** The amount of time and the time available for work assignments are essential elements in achieving and maintaining productivity and effectiveness. Several years ago, the City implemented a flexible work schedule for City departments. The two options were either a four day work week requiring 10 hours a day for four days or an eighty hour work week spread over a nine day period. Recently, the AQMD and other regulatory bodies have further reinforced the reduced work week concept for the City employees.

The flexible work schedule is a very popular option. This was confirmed in results of the employee survey and noted in our on-site discussion with employees. However, our on-site observation and analysis of the Department's operation indicated the design, implementation and management of the flexible hours work schedule is having significant negative impact on the staffing and effectiveness of its operations. Our analysis, as shown in Table 11, indicates the Department currently utilizes over 24 variations of the reduced work week schedules. Our on-site observations noted that on Monday and Friday there are limited staff available to provide customer service and perform required work. Moreover, because of the overlapping schedules, there are regularly scheduled periods when employees do not have supervision and adequate direction.

**Table 11**  
**Los Angeles City Planning Department**  
**Work Schedules\***

Hrs. per Day/ Days Off	All Employees	Supervisors Only
10/F	94	29
10/M	86	21
10/MTT	1	0
10/MThF	1	0
10/TTF	1	0
10/Th	1	0
10/W	5	1
6/VAR	1	0
8	50	19
8/2M	1	1
8/VAR	2	0
8/W	1	1
9/.5F	2	2
9/.5M	1	1
9/1F	18	3
9/1M	18	8
9/1Th	1	0
9/1W	2	0
9/2F	24	5
9/2M	21	7
9/2Th	3	0
9/VAR	1	0
9/W	1	0
PT/VAR	7	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>98</b>



Moreover, the varying schedules between the Department's and other City Departments' employees work units significantly impedes communication, workflow and management's ability to process work in a timely manner and to match limited resources with fluctuating caseloads.

**77. Recommendation:** The Department should select a specific flexible schedule for use by all employees. Given its service requirements (hearings, meetings, public counters, Commission meetings, etc.), it appears a flex-hour schedule over a 9 day 80 hour work week would maintain the desired flexibility for employees, meet mandated requirements, enable management to maintain the continuity of the work process and current levels of service with minimum interruption to the public (1 day closure every other week).

\*Work schedules are further differentiated by authorized variations from standard daily times for starting and ending work.

**78. Recommendation:** The Department should still maintain staggered hours for employees during the work day. This program has benefit for both the public (longer service hours) and the employees.

#### Topic: Recruitment and Selection

**Background:** Given the growth that occurred in the Department, particularly from 1986-1989, it was not surprising that the Department encountered significant difficulty in recruiting and filling the position in a timely manner. The City's Personnel Department and the Department's Personnel Officer have made some adjustments to a continuous examination cycle that have greatly expedited the selection process particularly at the entry level positions. Our analysis of the time delay in hiring is presented in Table 12, below.

**Table 12**  
**Hiring Time Lags**

Classification	Weeks from Certified Request to Hire		
	FY 1987-88	FY 1988-89	FY 1989-90
Planning Assistant	9.5	10.8	8.7
Planning Associate	1.8	1.7	3.2
Planner	8.1	9.7	6.4

For professional staff in the three largest professional classes, our analysis indicates that it takes approximately two months to fill entry level positions, one month to fill an Associate position and two months for a City Planner position.

While the administrative process and procedures for filling vacancies may be operating adequately, our review noted that the recruitment and selection policies for the Department's professional staff are not working as effectively. The delay in filling vacancies has been expedited by the implementation of continuous testing for these positions. This appears to be eliminating the delay and should be continued.

Despite complaints and comments heard from management throughout the organization regarding the quality of the applicant pool, our review noted that the Department takes no pro-active role in the recruitment of staff. These duties and responsibilities have been delegated to the City's Personnel Department. Furthermore, the City's current policy of limiting the filling of vacancies in the City Planner and Senior City Planner classifications to promotional only from within the Department significantly limits the Department's ability to attract and retain the most qualified staff. Adherence to these policies particularly during the rapid growth period had a major impact on the Department, as discussed above. As previously discussed, the growth in the number of staff and particularly the City Planner and Senior City Planner created an unusual opportunity to expand, broaden and complement the capabilities of the existing staff by actively recruiting other experienced professionals outside the City, particularly at the first line manager level into the Department. This approach could have significantly assisted the Department in meeting its Affirmative Action goals as well. Instead, the vacancies of existing positions as well as the newly authorized position, were done as promotional appointments for existing personnel in the lower level classes. Thus, many incumbents in these positions today find themselves possessing educational credentials but lacking the technical and practical training and skills, are unable to properly supervise and/or direct the activities of their subordinates. This recognized inability and limited training as discussed below has caused them to be insecure, frustrated and angry with the Department for its failure to assist them. It appears this situation contributed significantly to the low morale for both managers and their subordinates. Executive management has attempted to address this issue by functionally downgrading the duties and responsibilities for these positions as discussed above. This has resulted in budgetary problems and staffing imbalances that have further exacerbated the situation.

**79. Recommendation:** The recruitment and selection for all professional positions should be open and promotional. We recognize and support the need for Career Service in the City. However, there are provisions within the existing selection system to provide City employees with a competitive edge in securing promotional opportunities. However, a



Career Service should not displace the primary mission of this department, which is to attract and develop the professional staff who will provide the technical expertise needed to design superior policies regarding land use and development in the City of Los Angeles.

**80.** *Recommendation:* The Director of Planning and Executive Management should be integrally involved in the recruitment of professional staff. The recruitment and development of professional staff is the life blood of the organization and without it, the organization will not be able to achieve its objectives regardless of executive management capabilities. The Director should establish a liaison with the Urban Planning schools in the area that are training grounds for future staff. This should include having a regularly scheduled meeting with the Deans to discuss professional issues in areas of mutual interest.

The Department's Personnel Officer should make regularly scheduled visits to college campuses to recruit personnel and conduct job fairs as a means of educating potential employees regarding the available opportunities.

The Department is currently implementing a mentoring program aimed at attracting minorities and underrepresented classes into the profession. This is a noteworthy objective that should be included as part of every manager's evaluation.

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**Topic: Staff Training and Development**

*Background:* In this age of rapid change, training must receive a top priority within all organizations. This is particularly true in the area of Planning and its related disciplines (land use, transportation, environment, economics, housings, etc. Aside from the need to receive training to maintain and enhance technical and professional skills, individuals particularly management and supervisors, should receive training in enhancing their communication and personal interrelationship skills. These human relation and supervision skills are becoming increasingly more critical in successfully dealing with the challenges of a manager in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic workforce. Finally, there is the need for on-the-job training. Supervisors have responsibility to ensure that employees have clear direction and understanding of the work they are asked to complete and given feedback that will aid them in improving their needed skills.

Based on the above-mentioned reasons, it is apparent that training on a number of different levels and subjects throughout the organization is essential. Moreover, given the circumstances surrounding the rapid changes and growth in the Department and its staff, we anticipated a significant investment would be required in staff training and development to maintain equilibrium during this rapid growth.

For all intents and purposes, there is no staff training and development program for staff to develop the technical skills relative to their professional discipline. Our review noted that the amount of money budgeted by the Department for employees to attend outside seminars, conferences, and tuition reimbursement has remained constant during the last four years. However, as shown in Table 13 below, as the Department expanded the limited training dollars for outside programs actually decreased.

*Table 13*  
*Per Capita Training Expenditures*

	1990-91	1989-90	1988-89	1987-88
Manager's Training Budget	\$5878.00	\$7848.00	\$7134.00	\$5530.00
Number of Department Employees	404	382	368	304
\$ per capita per employee	\$14.55	\$20.54	\$19.39	\$18.19
Tuition Reimbursement Budget	\$2528.00	\$5055.00	\$5055.00	\$1685.00
Number of Department Employees	404	382	368	304
\$ per capita per employee	\$6.26	\$13.23	\$13.74	\$5.54

The Department has budgeted approximately \$70,000 during the last two fiscal years for outside technical training for the GIS staff. This training was specifically for the development of staff's skills related to the newly acquired software and hardware. The GIS program is discussed at length in another section of our report.

With respect to the second area of training, the City's Department of Personnel, in conjunction with the Department's Personnel unit provides a variety of management, supervisory and training development programs. These programs include but are not limited to such topics as Time Management, Supervision, New Employee Orientation, Management Development, Sexual Harassment and Cultural Diversity. As shown in Table 14, our review noted that staff attended over 15,000 hours in City-sponsored training programs. This represented an average of 38 hours a year or 1 week a year was spent by staff in formal City-run training programs. This appears to be a significant investment in time and money by the Department in training and developing employees. However, the results of our employee surveys and subsequent staff interviews indicated the number one issue identified by employees is the lack of training. Our study of the training program noted that there is not an overall training program developed for each employee that supports the employee's goals and objectives for the year. It is also noteworthy that many employees attend current training programs because they are mandated and/or they want a break from work. In general, the City's in-house training programs are not considered particularly useful and/or relevant to the staff. Moreover, the Department does not have an annual training goal for



*Table 14*  
*City of Los Angeles*  
*Personnel Department Sponsored Program*  
*Staff Training Hours, Fiscal Year 1989-90*

Classification	Hours Charged	Dollars Charged to Training Budget
Secretary	23.00	\$358.34
Ex. Secretary II	12.00	\$214.92
Ex. Secretary III	9.00	\$173.07
Clerk	18.00	\$185.22
Senior Clerk	75.00	\$1,073.82
Principal Clerk	6.00	\$104.40
Clerk Typist	186.00	\$2,017.97
Clerk Typist P	13.00	\$152.53
Clerk Typist U	8.00	\$92.60
Senior Clerk Typist	169.50	\$2,150.28
Senior Clerk Typist	25.00	\$355.28
Senior Clerk Typist	119.00	\$989.14
		\$850.40
Management Assistant	36.00	\$469.17
Systems	-	\$7,003.67
Systems Analyst 1	-	\$13,170.66
Systems Analyst 2	-	\$3,768.34
Graphic Design 2	532.00	\$5,909.24
Graphic Design 3	80.00	\$1,590.99
Senior Systems Analyst	35.00	\$964.38
Personnel Officer	10.00	\$319.24
O & S Analyst 1	159.00	\$2,901.15
O & S Analyst 2	16.00	\$349.49
Photographer	15.00	\$246.10
Cartographer	890.00	\$14,146.00
Senior Cartographer	8.00	\$149.14
Principal Cartographer	17.00	\$338.81
Information Systems Specialist	714.00	\$11,548.36
Info. Systems Supervisor I	133.00	\$2,733.60
Info. Systems Supervisor II	54.00	\$1,241.16
Drafting Assistant	5.00	\$69.40
Environmental Associate	186.00	\$3,742.09
Graphic Supervisor	8.00	\$212.32
Urban Research	20.00	\$860.43
Planning Assistant	3,777.00	\$62,681.21
Planning Associate	3,431.00	\$74,362.13
Planning Aide	384.00	\$5,717.72
City Planner	2,133.00	\$56,069.24
	794.50	\$24,398.82
Associate Zoning Adm.	128.00	\$4,583.33
Personnel Analyst	45.00	\$951.24
Admin. Asst. 1	4.00	\$65.68
Admin. Asst. 2	16.00	\$345.44
Chief Admin. Asst.	42.00	\$1,538.04
Deputy Director	40.00	\$1,678.00
	<u>15,662.50</u>	<u>\$316,929.33</u>

its employees. Recently, Department management has implemented roundtable discussions with Department staff on professional subjects (Balancing Growth... etc.) that act as a professional development tool and attempt to address the issue of improved training.

The third area of staff training and development is that provided through on-the-job experiences. As previously discussed, many of the Department's supervisors currently feel insecure with regard to their own knowledge and experience let alone feeling able to provide direction and supervision to subordinates. In addition, there is a general absence of desktop policies and procedures manuals that would assist staff in performing their assigned duties. Consequently, our review noted within existing work units, there are different standards for report format context used by Department staff. This variance in the Department's internal operating policies and procedures has been recognized as an issue effecting both the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's services by management in this Department and other City departments that work in conjunction with the Planning Department.

**81.**     *Recommendation:* The Department should have an annual training program that encompasses the training programs for each employee. The training program should be tied to the employee's goals and objectives and included as part of the evaluation process. A minimum of 40 hours a year should be established for each employee and funds budgeted accordingly.

**82.**     *Recommendation:* The Department should develop a training program in cooperation with the City's Personnel Department that focuses on the unique needs of the various levels within the Department. For example, there may be specific programs required for lower level staff aimed at technical skill development versus those that are developed for first line supervisors or executives. This will require utilizing outside consultants particularly for professional content areas (CEQA, Transportation, etc.) more than is currently being done.

**83.**     *Recommendation:* The Department should continue its recently implemented colloquium on current issues confronting the City. Outside professional should be invited to attend and share with staff their perspectives on matters. These forums would be useful to the Department management and staff in identifying areas of need and interest and structuring training programs to address them.

**84.**     *Recommendation:* The Department management should require each work unit to develop desktop policies and procedures manuals for use by assigned staff. These manuals would be developed by the existing staff by documenting in writing the existing work processes. Once documented,



the unit supervisor should review and make any changes necessary for uniformity, efficiency and effectiveness. Based on those changes, a final manual would be prepared and utilized by the assigned staff member as a guide in performing assigned tasks.

**85.** *Recommendation:* The Department's out-of-date Administrative Manual should be updated and issued to all employees.

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**Topic: Job Rotation**

**Background:** Job rotation is a currently popular concept in organizations management. It has been developed and used extensively by the Japanese. Traditionally, managers expect an employee to become thoroughly competent in his or her current job before allowing the employee to move to another job. New theory, however, suggests that competence is actually built through rotation through a variety of job experiences.

There are obvious trade-offs to be considered in evaluating the worthiness of job rotation. Keeping an employee in one job reduces training costs and, in theory, increases efficiency. Mobility increases training costs but reduces boredom, builds greater flexibility and organizational awareness, and stimulates new ideas. Modern management theories suggest that the benefits of mobility more than compensate for its disadvantages.

Since the late 1970s, the Planning Department had a formal job rotation program that enabled Planning Assistants, City Planning Assistants and City Planners to request formal reassignment for job enrichment and development. However, the rapid expansion of the Department and the unusually large number of promotions that were occurring tended to sidetrack the rotation program. Now, rotations are handled as transfers. During the last fiscal year, there were limited transfers for job development purposes.

**86.** *Recommendation:* The Rotation Program should be re-implemented as part of a formal management training and development program. A method needs to be found to better prepare staff for rotation, particularly at the supervisory level. At a minimum, any supervisor lacking supervisory skills in his or her current position (see recommendation immediately below) should not be considered for rotation. Furthermore, some formal technical training should be provided to any supervisor about to rotate to a technical area new to him or her, even a supervisor with good management skills. The success of the rotation program should not depend upon the ability of line staff to train their new supervisors.

One way to accomplish this is to have the new supervisor working part-time (1/4 to 1/3 time) in the new function for one or two months prior to

the full-time transfer. In some cases, this may require additional back-up assistance for the supervisor to accommodate the lost 1/4 to 1/3 time. On the other hand, it's not unusual for supervisors to take a three or four week vacation, which creates an even larger problem. We believe the system can learn to accommodate this new training period and any impacts are far preferable to the current situation.

As part of the rotation program, consideration should be given to moving both managers and staff between planning units and permit units. This will provide all employees with a broader perspective on the totality of planning.

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**Topic: Budget and Finance - User Fees and Charges**

**Background:** The City Planning Department provides mandated regulatory planning functions to assure that all building projects within the City limits meet specific specifications and that the projects do not conflict with the City's General Plan, zoning or policies. This function facilitates the process of development as a service to developers and commercial and residential home owners. It is important that those who benefit from a special service should pay for the City's cost in providing that service. The City attempts to recover the cost of planning functions through the use of User Fees and Charges.

There are currently 91 categories of User Fees and Charges being employed by the City Planning Department. Within these categories, there are further divisions of fees by particular type of case such as under Tentative Tracts where fees vary depending on whether the case involved is a "One Family Dwelling", "Other Than One Family Dwelling", "Buildings Other Than Dwelling" and so on. Applying the correct fee to the correct type of case has often proved to be difficult. The accuracy of charges depends wholly on employees being able to determine which of the many specific fees might apply.

The current method for the development of User Fees and Charges is complex. The method for determining these rates is used throughout the City and is not unique to the Planning Department. In brief, revised or new fees are determined by dividing the total cost (which will be described momentarily) of providing the service in the specific fee category by the number of cases in that category. This results in a new fee, however it is highly susceptible to inaccuracies in determining the cost of providing the service.

The cost of providing the service for each category of User Fees and Charges is arrived at by totaling the: direct cost (reported by employees on time sheets to the specific code but not by individual case); retirement on salaries; direct costs incurred by the Department as part of the City's direct costs of operations; divisional overhead; departmental overhead; and, finally, a general city overhead rate. The problem with this approach is



that in four of the six elements of the total cost, the cost is determined by the manner in which employees report their time. In the event that employees do not charge their time to direct cost codes (or to incorrect codes), this distorts the true cost of providing the service.

There are two additional problems with the present approach to determining cost. First, in many cases a singular case is not solely handled by the Planning Department. Typically, from one to as many as five other departments may be involved in processing a given case. These departments include Building and Safety, City Attorney, Transportation, Street Lighting, and Fire. When any or all of these departments are involved, the cost of their services is not presently included in the total cost of case processing as calculated by the Planning Department, and therefore has no impact on the development of new fees for the succeeding fiscal year. This has and continues to cause problems in the allocation of resources (both financial and personnel) between City departments.

To illustrate this point consider the following example. If the number of cases processed rises in a given year then two disparate things may occur. On the one hand, the Planning Department will theoretically recover its cost through increased revenue in the form of User Fees and Charges and will be able to support the increased workload. However, the increase in caseload, while increasing workload in any or all of the five departments cited earlier, will not be accompanied by an increase in revenues to those departments. Therefore, the effected departments are required to process an increased workload without increased personnel or financial resources. This problem is currently being examined by the Planning Department as well as City Council and current projections of new fees are being developed which would reflect the cost of other departments in providing specific services related to planning.

The second problem with the present approach is that costs that are presently recovered through User Fees and Charges revenues only cover the costs of those divisions or units which are involved in case processing of land use within the Planning Department. In the 1990-91 fiscal year, the Planning Department estimates that it will receive approximately \$5,360,000 in revenues from User Fees and Charges. This represents a cost recovery of 33% of the Planning Department's \$16,072,000 budget. Due to slow down in the economy and in the building and development trades in particular, the percentage of the Planning Department's total budget recovered through User Fees and Charges has declined from approximately 42% in 1987-88 to the present 33%. If this trend continues, the Planning Department will become more dependent on City General Fund resources to fund their operations.

The target percentage for cost recovery for Planning Department operations is a matter for City policy. However, it can be argued that while divisions including Citywide, Neighborhood Planning, Systems and Mapping, and Administrative Services do not directly process case loads, their work is nevertheless an integral part of the planning process. The



work done by those divisions just cited is essential to the overall planning function within the City of Los Angeles. Without their services, the work of the land use case processing divisions, as well as the consumers of those services, would not proceed smoothly.

Finally, as part of our analysis of User Fees and Charges we examined the rates for similar functions charged in the City of Los Angeles versus the County of Los Angeles and a number of other local municipalities. The Los Angeles City Planning Department and the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning vary in their operations and the many services they provide to consumers. As discussed earlier, the City Planning Department has 91 categories of User Fees and Charges versus only 41 categories for the County. While the City charges for particular functions performed on a case, the County typically has a one time fee for a case. For example, a Tentative Tract in Los Angeles County would require a filing fee of \$2,510 which would include most, and typically all, other incidental functions performed on that case including hearings. In the City of Los Angeles, a "One Family Dwelling" Tentative Tract requires a filing fee of \$1,838, however incidental fees will add on to that original charge if they are required in the case.

Therefore, it is not possible within the breadth of this brief overview to do an in-depth analysis to compare development costs between the City and the County. However, an informal survey of consumers of City and County planning services revealed that they believe that the County process and fee structure was more streamlined and easier to engage than is true of the processes and fee structure in the City of Los Angeles.

**87.**     *Recommendation:* The City Planning Department's categories for User Fees and Charges should be simplified. While we recognize that the specificity of charges can be effective in charging a "fair" rate for a particular function, we feel that many of the categories overlap and could be combined to simplify the process and clarity for consumers. A simplified system would benefit consumers by clarifying what the total cost of a project will most likely be. Furthermore, it would streamline the cost reporting function for City Planning employees and lead to more accurate reporting of time per case.

The City Planning Department should continue with its current effort to incorporate other department's costs of providing services into the total cost calculated by the Planning Department. Their costs would then be reflected in the new User Fees and Charges for the succeeding year.

As part of this process, the other departments should receive a proportion of revenues derived from the User Fees and Charges commensurate with their costs of providing the service. In the event of an increase in the number of cases processed, this will enable those departments to handle the increased workload through increased resources.



**88.**     *Recommendation:* The City Planning Department, in conjunction with the City Council, should examine their current policy of cost recovery for the City Planning functions. The target level for cost recovery is a matter of policy to be decided by the City and then implemented. This may result in a reiteration of current policy, however this process would serve to clearly define for Planning Management the level they should target for cost recovery, given the factors discussed under the background section of this topic.

**89.**     *Recommendation:* The City Planning Department should conduct an in-depth analysis of User Fees and Charges in comparison to other municipal entities. Due to the scope of this report, it was not possible to examine the effect that current fee structures may have on development within the City of Los Angeles versus alternative sites, however we feel this would be a worthy and timely endeavor.

**90.**     *Recommendation:* The City Planning Department should develop a work order based reporting and accounting system for use in determining User Fees and Charges on a case by case basis. This system would serve two purposes. Currently, costs per individual cases are not tracked but instead are reported by case type codes. In certain instances, once a fee is collected the Planning Department, regardless of the fact that it may require inordinate amounts of time, cannot recover the full cost of processing the case. Conversely, if two cases fall under the same case type code, but require disparate amounts of time by Planning personnel, both cases are charged the same fee which may be inequitable. A new reporting and accounting system could therefore enhance the Planning Department's ability to charge fees according to actual time on task on the case which would be based on hourly rates per function. These rates would be developed to include overhead and indirect costs as discussed earlier in the background discussion. Furthermore, consumers would be more equitably charged according to the effort required on an individual case.

This system could be accommodated within the existing automated system by modifying the chart of accounts. Implementation of a work order system would enable the Planning Department to establish a deposit system, as currently exists in many other municipal planning departments. The Department would receive a deposit for the estimate amount that a service will cost and would then be billed for the remainder if the individual case cost is greater than the deposit amount or, conversely, they would be reimbursed for the unused portion of the deposit.

**91.**     *Recommendation:* The Planning Department should establish its development related activities as an Enterprise Fund supported activity. Under an Enterprise Fund, all of the Department's development services would be supported through user fees and charges. The revenue raised through the fees and charges would be sufficient to cover all costs both direct and indirect incurred by the Department in providing those services.



The use of the Enterprise concept will enable the Department the freedom to set its fees and charges to provide the desired service levels to its constituents. The implementation of this concept will, in the long term, benefit both the City's General Fund and the level of service provided the development community. Implementation of this recommendation will require: an initial capital contribution in the form of a loan from the City's General Fund to provide working capital for equipment and program funding, and a change in City policy regarding cost accounting policies and procedures pertaining to the Department's operations. However, the reliance on user fees and charges will instill an accountability for the cost effectiveness of its services that currently does not exist.

General Fund money that may be freed up under this system should be transferred to the under-funded planning programs.

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**Topic: Central Word Processing and Clerical Support**

**Background:** Despite the white collar nature of the Department's workforce and heavy reliance on text processing and graphics, there is limited use of technology. As previously discussed, our review noted that all of the professionals write out their reports in longhand and submit them to a supervisor who physically transports the documents to Central Word Processing Center located on the Fifth Floor of City Hall. The word processing center has 12 full-time clerical staff members who input text provided by field employees, merge files with standard forms and conditions, return the draft report for review, and input any changes. Every document is handled by the Center at least twice -- draft and final copies. Moreover, as shown in Table 15 below, our review noted the lengths of those documents varies significantly between the various units, as would be expected given the different natures of the work performed.

**Table 15**  
**Central Word Processing Average Report Production**

Unit	Avg. # Pages/ Document	Average Turnaround Time
Zoning Administrator	4	11 hours
City Wide	22	9 hours
General Administration	22	9 hours
Miscellaneous	8	6 hours

The WPC provides quick turnaround time once the document is delivered and assigned to the staff. The clerical personnel assigned to the various field units do not have any technological interface with the WPC. Thus, documents must be physically transported by personnel. Many of the clerical units in the various divisions were not staffed or equipped to handle the processing of documents. The system of a central clerical pool, equipped with sophisticated machines and software to process the reams of



text generated by the out stationed professional staff is organizationally and technologically obsolete. Moreover, the current workload of the Center clearly indicates the Department's workload does not justify the massing of resources and investment in technology for a select few.

**92.** The Central Word Processing Center should be abandoned and staff reorganized to the various line units. In addition, all professional staff should be equipped with a terminal and be responsible for the inputting of their initial text. The terminal should be linked with a host processor within the work unit that is staffed by the Division's clerical staff. Those clerical personnel would be responsible for formatting and preparing the draft and final documents input by the professional staff. This service delivery model is widely subscribed by professional service organizations like the Planning Department. We recognize the implementation of this recommendation would take a capital investment (\$300,000 or \$2.00 per employee) on the part of the City for equipment and training. However, the terminals should be equipped to enable the professional staff to perform other analytical tasks that are currently being performed manually. The multi-purpose nature of the equipment, the improved utilization of both staff and equipment, will significantly increase the efficiency of the staff, which will more than offset the capital investment.

The clerical staff currently assigned to the various sections and divisions should be reorganized and equipped to provide clerical support for their respective Divisions. Overall, our review noted a general lack of professional administrative support, particularly in the line operations. It appears some of this is attributable to the Department focusing its energies and resources on the CWPC and downgrading the line clerical functions. We recommend the Department aggressively build up the administrative support capacity in each of the units, including both organization and supervision, training and proper equipment. An improved clerical operation will enhance both the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's professional staff.

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#### **Topic: Graphics**

**Background:** In the world of Urban Planning, often the medium is the message. The graphics used by this Department to communicate information to its constituents is critical. Our review noted that while much of the work completed by the Graphics Section is of professional quality, the Department's capabilities are technically obsolete. The Graphics Section has 1 Mac II ci and appropriate graphics packages to service the graphics needs of 160 planning professionals. More important, no one in the Graphics sections has been formally trained in the use of the Macintosh computer. Consequently, some staff members spend a significant amount of time in self-tutorial. The other staff use old, outdated technology and obsolete equipment to complete their work assignments.



For example, the Graphics section has no photo enlargement or reduction equipment, no model maker, and no slide viewer. As a result, the Department does not avail itself of a number of opportunities to enhance its communications skills through graphics or other audio visual aids.

Moreover, the Photographer assigned to this section maintains an office that doubles as a development lab on the 10th Floor of City Hall. The office/lab is a converted closet and was not outfitted with the proper equipment to efficiently process the development of film. Our on-site observation noted significant resources are wasted, particularly water, and that environmental pollutants are used because of obsolete equipment

**93.**     *Recommendation:* The Department should appropriate \$50,000 to modernize and expand the capabilities of the Graphics unit. These monies should be allocated for the purchase of additional computers and training staff on computer graphics. Eventually, the goal is for each staff member to have and fully utilize their own personal computer for graphic design purposes.

**94.**     *Recommendation:* The Department should appropriate \$30,000 for properly equipping the photo development lab.

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#### **Topic:   Space**

*Background:* The expansion of the Department's staff has created a significant strain on the Department's office space at City Hall. Recently, additional office space was rented outside City Hall to accommodate the Department's space needs. The physical separation has had a negative impact on the efficiency of the Department's workflow, impaired communication and supervision, and resulted in wasted staff time spent travelling back and forth between City Hall and the satellite offices. Moreover, the existing space within City Hall for these remaining employees is inadequate. The location of offices and adjacencies of functions and public reception areas are dysfunctional and contribute to the inefficiency of the current operations and low employee morale. The poor physical work environment provided by the City for the Planning Department staff is perhaps the most telling of all our analyses in assessing the relative priority placed on this City function and its employees by City leaders.

Currently, the City Planning Department occupies approximately 38,100 square feet of space at City Hall on the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Floors (the Fourth Floor service counter is not addressed in this topic). There are approximately 207 Planning Department employees occupying that space, which yields 184 square feet per employee. The City Planning Department also occupies approximately 35,000 square feet of space at 221 South Figueroa Street. There are approximately 98 Planning Department employees occupying that space, which yields 357 square feet per employee.



During the course of our study, many concerns were voiced about overcrowding and poor working conditions at City Hall on floors five, six and seven and the corresponding impact on employee attitudes and productivity. When questioned, employees at the 221 South Figueroa location indicated satisfaction with their work space and environment.

Our analysis of space standards per employee, including aisle and storage space required, revealed that there is adequate gross space to house the employees currently housed at City Hall on the fourth, fifth, and seventh floors. However, the space is adequate only if the current building area is remodeled to provide for more functional use of space and permit adjacencies of the Department's like functions.

**95.**     *Recommendation:* The Planning Department should reorganize office assignments according to functional fit (as discussed under the Office of Zoning Administration Section). Simultaneously, the Department should redesign, modernize and improve existing space to maximize the space at City Hall. A preliminary estimate shows \$2 million dollars would be required for this work.

The Department should consider moving non on-site-essential units or services including parts of the Administrative Services Division and systems and mapping, to the 221 Figueroa location to better utilize space at both that site and City Hall. The transfer would enable the Neighborhood and Citywide planners to be in City Hall adjacent to the other units.

The Department should develop a detailed space plan that outlines the adjacency needs, public counter and meeting areas for each organizational unit. This data would be used to formulate the remodel program recommended above.

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#### **Topic:   Budget Preparation and Administration**

*Background:* The Administrative Services section is responsible for assisting the Department and Division managers in preparing, administering, and maintaining their respective budgets. The budget document is a management tool that is intended to serve multiple objectives including: Outline to the policy makers, Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, and CAO the resources required to achieve desired objectives; and present to supervisors and managers the resources that have been allocated to achieve the policy makers' expectations. The Budget is the key document that establishes management's accountability. During our interviews with supervisory personnel and review of the Department's internal correspondence, it was apparent little attention is paid to the budget other than meeting CAO requests for additional information to support requests.

A significant amount of time and energy is devoted to justifying additional personnel in the user fee and charge supported services and reorganizing the Department. During the last four years, the Department has undertaken four major reorganizations including a recent one that was never recognized in the budget. At best, the Department budget is approached incrementally, focusing on justifying additional personnel to meet increasing caseload and work requirements with little attention paid to desired work programs, required staffing and timely completion and desired outcomes. For example, as shown in Table 8, our analysis indicated the Department's number of authorized positions has increased 38%, compared to 33% in the actual number of staff during the last five years. The variance between budgeted positions and actual positions is particularly relevant when examining the Department's historical relationship between authorized budget and actual expenditures for personnel as shown in Table 16 below.

**Table 16**  
***Planning Department Budget vs. Actual Personnel Expenditures***

Year	Salaries	Overtime	Total Salaries
FY 1986-87 Budget	\$9,914,483	\$179,952	\$10,094,408
FY 1986-87 Actual	\$9,991,462	\$130,357	\$10,121,819
Budget vs. Actual			0%
FY 1987-88 Budget	\$11,331,157	\$89,925	\$11,421,082
FY 1987-88 Actual	\$11,312,777	\$195,114	\$11,507,891
Budget vs. Actual			1%
FY 1988-89 Budget	\$12,938,117	\$103,597	\$13,041,714
FY 1988-89 Actual	\$12,486,049	\$258,900	\$12,744,949
Budget vs. Actual			(2)%
FY 1989-90 Budget	\$14,482,836	\$250,000	\$14,732,836
FY 1989-90 Actual	\$13,996,139	\$284,674	\$14,280,813
Budget vs. Actual			(3)%
FY 1990-91 Budget	\$14,517,195	\$100,000	\$14,617,195
FY 1990-91 Actual	\$13,896,323	\$100,000	\$13,996,323
Budget vs. Actual			(4)%

The Department has consistently been within 2% or less of its approved budget with respect to personnel expenditures. Based on a comparison of the Department's budgeted vs. actual expenditures, it is apparent many of the Department's authorized vacant positions are not funded and thus not intended to be filled. This budget masquerade raises questions regarding the accurate representation of the Department's staffing resources required to meet desired and expected objectives.

This confusion and frustration regarding required resources to accomplish desired objectives was confirmed in our interviews with staff, management, CAO and Council and reflected in the levels of productivity and accountability discussed throughout our report.



**96.**     *Recommendation:* The budget document should be used as a management tool to accurately reflect the resources required to achieve desired objectives. The budget development process should be formalized with specific target dates to develop realistic resource requirements based not only on caseload and work projections, but also including requirements which reflect the resources needed to complete those work programs which are in-progress or planned for the upcoming fiscal year.

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The budget development cycle should begin with the submission of preliminary division budgets on or about October 1. The preliminary budgets, including projected staffing requirements, would be built upon the division manager's projections of the following: present and projected case and workload; on-going programs; desired work programs; and, expected completion and outcomes of programs. Upon administrative and Departmental review, preliminary budgets would be returned for revision by mid-February. The process of internal Departmental budget negotiations would then take place between mid-February and the end of March. It is vital that during this stage proposed programs be approved in order to enable the divisions and the Department as a whole to make realistic staffing projections which will allow divisions to achieve their stated objectives.

On or around April 1, the Department budget should be internally finalized and division budgets returned to division managers. Division managers would then develop plans for filling needed positions and requests and submit them to Personnel for processing. By mid-May, the Department and divisions should be able to begin the applicant review and interview process. Pending final approval of the City's budget, the Planning Department and the divisions will then be in position to proceed with the hiring or re-assignment of personnel to staff on-going or approved programs. New or re-assigned staff would then be available to begin on July 1, the beginning of the budgeted fiscal year.

This budget process must be viewed as an integral management process within the Planning Department. Upon adoption of the City budget, management's accountability should be measured against their ability to achieve stated objectives. However, this will only apply if the Department receives the funding to staff the necessary positions as reflected in the budget.

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**Topic:    Personal Services Contract Administration**

*Background:* The Administrative Services section is responsible for assisting the Department and Division managers in preparing, administering, and maintaining personnel services contracts with private vendors. The current process for contract administration is based upon the



Mayor's Executive Order #16, which outlines the steps to be followed by Departments in each stage of the process.

The current program for contract administration includes the following: Report to the Mayor (of intent to enter into contract and authorization for request for proposal); Preparation of the Request for Proposal; Mailing of the Request for Proposal; Consultant Selection Committee; Pre-Bid Conference Scheduling; Consultant Interview; Consultant Selection and Notification; Preparation of Contract; Execution of Contract; Distribution of Contract; Encumbrance of Funds; Payment of Invoices; Term of Contract; and, Amendment of Contract. Each of these stages includes multiple steps which are also outlined in standard procedure. Contracts are classified as either Land-Use, Transportation, or EIR contracts. Regardless of the type or size of contract, the current process for contract administration is followed for every contract undertaken by the Planning Department. There is currently no provision for quality control to eliminate unqualified bidders from securing work due to low-bid requirements. This has significant implications for the quality of work and staff time required to manage the contractor.

Contracts are administered and monitored by the Administrative Services Section of the Planning Department. At present, on-going contract administration is handled by the Management Analyst II under the Contracts unit of Administrative Services with assistance from the Senior Management Analyst I. At the division level, the project manager monitors contract performance and deliverables and requests and authorizes payment of consultants through Administrative Services. There are currently 17 active personal services contracts within the Planning Department. We anticipate the number of personnel contracts will significantly increase, based on our study recommendations and the Department's anticipated work program.

**97.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Department should request authorization from the Mayor's Office to revise the contract administration process currently being followed. The current process leads to a lengthy request and selection period which requires a substantial amount of time and effort for each contract on the part of Planning Department personnel. The process also obstructs the ability of the Department and division managers to seek and implement solutions or improvements in a timely manner. We understand the department is already exploring this option and we support it in this effort.

The Planning Department should adopt a streamlined process of contract administration which will expedite and simplify the current process. Shortly before the beginning of the new fiscal year, the Planning Department should solicit Statements of Qualifications from firms which are interested in consulting to the Planning Department. The Department would conduct a Pre-Bid Conference to answer questions and provide information to interested firms. Firms would submit Statements under each or any of the three types of contracts for which they propose to provide



services- Land-Use, Transportation, EIR. The Statements of Qualifications from each firm would include a list of relevant experience, staff resumes, hourly rates, references and any other forms which may be required by the City.

A pool of four to six firms for each type of contract would then be selected by a Consultant Selection Committee and pre-approved to do work on contracts with the Planning Department. This list of consultant would then be maintained by the assigned Administrative Services staff. When a consultant is needed and a project approved by the Department and City Council for funding, the Department or division manager would submit a Scope of Services to Administrative Services. Administrative Services would then send out a copy of the scope of services to the pre-approved firms and solicit a proposal. Administrative Services would receive the proposal and, with the appropriate Division, select a consultant. A contract would then be executed and the contract begun. As is currently practiced, the Department or division manager would continue to monitor the consultants work and deliverables and request and authorize Administrative Services to process payments.

The Planning Department would solicit new Statements of Qualification each year to afford all firms a fair opportunity to participate in City contracts. The process outlined above would provide for extensive time and cost savings when compared to the current process. The Department and division managers ability to obtain consulting services in a timely manner would be enhanced through the pre-approval process of consultant selection.

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## **Topic: Organization**

**Background:** Administrative Services was intended to take advantage of the Department's size by centralizing the overhead functions and relieving the professional planners of the administrative non-main mission duties and responsibilities. The results of the employee survey indicated a widely held belief that Administrative Services is not a support function. In many instances, an adversarial relationship has developed between line units and units within Administrative Services division. Our on-site observations and interviews with staff noted the presence of a significant amount of ill will between Administrative Services and various units within the Department. We recognize that some of this may be inherent in the nature of any relationship between direct line and internal support functions. However, there appears a significant opportunity to enhance both efficiency and overall effectiveness of Administrative Services and its relationship with its client agencies. Moreover, there appears to be unnecessary separation of the support functions in Administrative Services that result in the proliferation of management positions and sub-optimization of various work units.

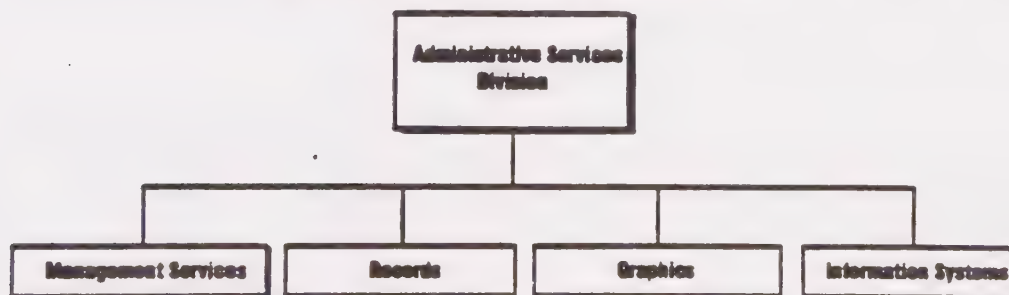
98. *Recommendation:* The Administrative Services should be reorganized as shown in Figure 8 to provide direct supervision and direction of the various units by the Deputy Director. The current span of control for the Deputy Director is 1:1 and 1:4 for the Chief Management Analyst. These are too narrow given the number of employees in the unit and the nature of the services being performed. The Chief Management Analyst should be reassigned to head the Management Services Section.

The Management Services Section would continue to provide the financial management and budget support functions for the Department. The Personnel Section, which manages over 76% of the Department's allocated resources, should be combined with Management Services to provide a more comprehensive system of accountability for staffing programs and services.

The Records Management Section would be responsible for the filing, retrieval and storage of the Department's files, maps and records. The Central Word Processing functions would be reassigned to the line units as recommended above.

The Graphics section would retain its current duties and responsibilities along with the supervision for the reprographics section previously discussed and assigned to Records. Information Systems would be added as a fourth section in this Division. This section would include those functions previously recommended in the Systems and Mapping Section of this report for inclusion in Administrative Services.

*Figure 8  
Recommended Reorganization*



The reorganization will broaden the span of control for the Deputy Director position and group together under a four managers all of the internal systems and process of the Department.

99. *Recommendation:* The Division should implement a customer service training program for all employee assigned to this Division. Based on our observations and feedback from employees, the benefits of such a program should assist the Division in building an improved working relationship with the other units.



## V. CITYWIDE DIVISION

### OVERVIEW

The three missions of the Citywide Division are:

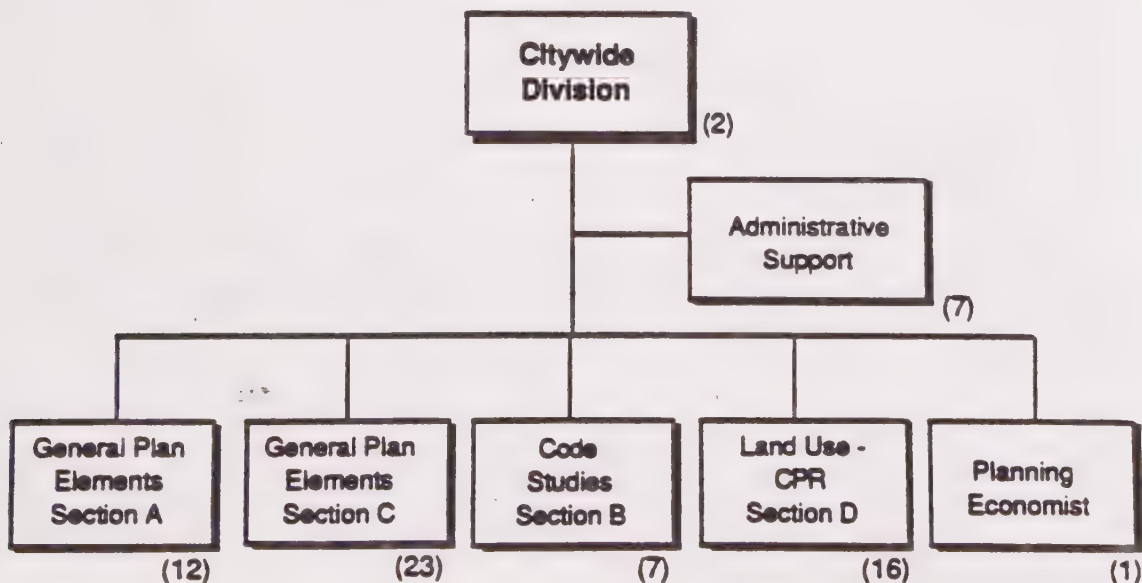
- To prepare and to maintain a city-wide general plan in a legally adequate manner.
- To provide a city-wide direction and framework for the other planning projects and divisions.
- To update and to maintain zoning ordinance.

This division establishes the city-wide planning policies, guidelines, and philosophy within which other divisions of the Planning Department make specific interpretations. By articulating the vision that Los Angeles is to become, other functional areas, such as the Office of Zoning Administration, will more consistently resolve specific cases to be compatible with the city-wide plan. This also enhances the consistency of resolutions from one case to the next.

This division also includes the Community Plan Revision (CPR) Program that periodically revises the community plans which comprise the Land Use Element of the General Plan. When this study began, Code Studies was a section within Citywide and worked to achieve the third mission statement listed above.

Figure 9 is the organizational structure of the Citywide Division.

**Figure 9**  
**Organizational Chart**



For the purposes of presentation here and in subsequent sections, the data and our analysis pertains to this Division as it was organized and functioning on March 1, 1991, and does not address subsequent reorganizations or changes. Since this date, Code Studies has been reassigned to Plan Implementation Division. The recommendation for the ultimate placement of Code Studies within the Department is presented in the section that discusses Plan Implementation.

The sections within Citywide planning are as follows:

#### **General Plan Elements - Section A**

This section's mission is to revise certain elements of the General Plan. Currently, the section is assigned the following elements:

- Housing
- Open Space/Conservation
- Public Facilities
- Cultural/Urban Design
- Infrastructure
- Air Quality
- Safety
- Noise

Twelve (12) staff positions are allocated for this section. Allowing for the section head, a senior planner, and two vacancies, there are nine (9) staff positions whose major assignment is drafting elements.

The staff of this section also performs specific projects as directed by divisional and departmental management.

#### **General Plan Elements - Section C**

This section's mission is to develop certain elements for the General Plan. The difference between this section and the first section, A, presented above, is the list of elements to be developed. Section C is responsible for:

- Transportation/Circulation
- Balanced Growth
- Facilities (LAX and Harbor) Master Plan

New to this section in the current fiscal year is a group previously assigned to the Community Plan Revision (CPR) section which is a part of the Citywide division.

This newly assigned group still provides staff assistance to CPR but will gradually become more involved supporting the Balanced Growth project. Currently, this group performs quality assurance audits on the



consultant deliverables, such as database information, maps, and the inventorying of parcels with historical and/or environmental significance, for the CPR function.

Twenty-three (23) positions are allocated to this section. Allowing for the section head, a senior planner, and four vacancies, there are eighteen positions whose major assignment is writing the assigned elements and providing quality assurance.

The staff of this section also performs specific projects as directed by divisional and departmental management. The staff, particularly the six positions in the transportation group, perform a number of other studies.

### **Code Studies - Section B**

The mission of this section is to research and to propose changes to the zoning ordinances that have city-wide implications. Over 90% of the section's workload comes from City Council motions. The remainder comes from the Planning Commission and the Planning Department. This section was previously a part of the Office of Zoning Administration. In December, 1989, this section was transferred to and made a part of Citywide. During the course of this study, the section was reassigned to Plan Implementation.

The typical steps in the code studies process are:

1. Council makes a motion regarding a desired change in the land use.
2. Motion is usually referred to Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) committee.
3. PLUM refers the study to staff.
4. Staff conducts research.
5. Staff develops recommendations and, after coordinating with the City Attorney, drafts a zoning ordinance.
6. Staff presents findings, recommendations, and draft ordinance to the Planning Commission.
7. Planning Commission conducts public hearings.
8. Study may be referred back to staff for additional research.
9. Study clears the Planning Commission.
10. The draft ordinance is sent to the City Attorney's office for review.
11. The City Attorney re-drafts the ordinance.
12. The City Attorney forwards the ordinance to PLUM.
13. When the ordinance clears PLUM, it is sent to the City Council.
14. After consideration, the City Council adopts the ordinance.

## Land Use - CPR - Section D

The mission of this section is to revise the community plans such that the viability and relevance of the plans are maintained. The thirty-five (35) community plans, as a group, form the Land Use element of the General Plan.

This process is separate from the AB283 effort to achieve zoning compliance with the General Plan. The CPR function presented here is the group that conducts a thorough study and develops a revised community plan that addresses all the current development issues surrounding the community. This group is not involved in the effort to publish revised community plans resulting from changes generated by achieving zoning compliance (AB283). The project to revise a community plan has three phases with steps for each phase.

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Steps</u>
I Background	1. Document Land Use 2. Prepare maps 3. Conduct first Community Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting 4. Complete Historic Context statement 5. Complete Market Forecast
II Plan Development	6. Begin initial Plan 7. Review Initial Plan 8. Present Initial Plan to CPAC 9. Conduct public hearings
III Plan Approval	10. CPAC considers and approves 11. Planning Commission considers and approves 12. Council reviews 13. Council adopts the community plan 14. Publish community plan and ordinance

Starting in 1989, the Planning Department envisioned beginning five community plans each year for seven years. At the end of the seven year cycle, all thirty-five community plans would be revised and with maintenance, the plans would remain current with regards to zoning and land use.

## Planning Economist

The mission of this function would be to conduct economic and statistical analysis to support various studies and projects in the Citywide division. This function has never been staffed. The position was authorized but then frozen and has never been filled.



## Divisional Staffing

Table 17 details the staffing, by classification, of the Division. It is currently authorized for sixty-eight (68) positions that translate into sixty-seven (67) full time equivalent employees. Two planning associates work half-time each in the Code Studies section. This table charts the staffing trends for the last five years. The number of authorized positions are compared to the actual staff employed for each fiscal year.

**Table 17**  
**Staffing by Classification**

	FY90-91		FY89-90		FY88-89		FY87-88		FY86-87	
	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual
Principal City Planner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior City Planner	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
City Planner	11	11	5	5	5	5	3	3	1	1
City Planning Associate	26	19	12	9	7	6	4	3	2	1
Planning Assistant	14	10	4	4	5	2	5	3	3	3
Planning Aide	0	1								
Planning Economist	1	0								
Environmental Associate II	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			
Management Assistant	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Secretary	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Clerk Typist	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Clerk Typist	5	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Clerk Stenographer	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Transportation Planning Assoc. II					1	1	1	1		
Transportation Planning Assoc. I							1	1		
Transportation Engineer Assist II							1	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>

As shown in the next table, Citywide has a current operating budget of \$2,614,633. The budget data is presented for five fiscal years.

**Table 18**  
**Citywide Budget**

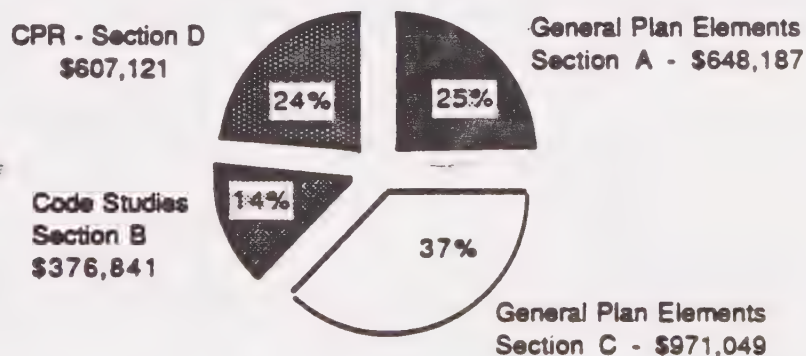
	FY90-91	FY89-90	FY88-89	FY87-88	FY86-87
<b>Salaries</b>					
Salaries, General	2,190,263	1,300,300	1,338,450	992,714	558,339
Overtime	13,200	14,000	7,616	2,730	2,730
<b>Salaries Subtotal</b>	<b>2,203,463</b>	<b>1,314,300</b>	<b>1,346,066</b>	<b>925,444</b>	<b>2,205,221</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Printing and Binding	55,493	22,357	18,025	21,000	35,500
Travel	0	0	0	0	0
Construction Materials	500	500	0	0	0
Contractual Services	169,539	29,692	32,748	39,554	6,051
Transportation Expense	112	0		0	0
Governmental Meetings	412	300	300	0	0
Office/Administrative	120,527	8,750	5,032	2,154	1,603

	FY90-91	FY89-90	FY88-89	FY87-88	FY86-87
Operating Supplies	33,549	3,000	3,694	4,328	3,355
Expense Subtotal	380,132	64,599	59,799	67,036	46,509
Equipment					
Equipment	31,038	0	8,180	0	0
Total Appropriation	2,614,633	1,378,899	1,414,045	992,480	607,578

To present the cost of services by section, the budget had to be separated more discretely into programs than is currently available from the City. As 85% of the budget is for salaries, direct cost, this cost was used as a basis to allocate indirect cost, such as office space, etc. Each section's percentage of direct cost was used to compute their share of indirect cost. The computed total budget using this approach for all of Citywide was \$2,603,199 as compared to the actual budget of \$2,614,633. The difference is \$11,434, or 0.4%, much less than one percent. The small difference validates the approach of using direct cost augmented with an allocation for indirect cost to compute a reasonably accurate estimate for the cost of each program.

The following figure illustrates the distribution of budget dollars to the various sections.

**Figure 10**  
**Budget Distribution**



The Citywide Division does not generate any revenue nor provide services or products for which a fee is charged.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Topic: The General Plan

**Background:** The City Charter requires the City to have a General Plan. The City's existing General Plan consists of 29 elements plus 35 community or district plans as listed in Table 19.



elements range in age from 3 years to 24 years with an average age of 10 years. The community plans were partially updated as part of the AB 283 process. Excluding the AB 283 updating the community plans range in age from 1 year to 21 years with an average age of 13 years. Most planning experts suggest plans should be reviewed every 5 years or at a minimum every 10 years.

The revised General Plan will use the table of contents shown in Table 19. The existing documents have been organized into the proposed table of contents structure. The proposed General Plan element name and its subordinated topics are shown in *italics*. The existing documents have been organized as they might best fit under this new table of content structure. For the existing documents, the title and the adopted date are listed.

All the community plans in the Land Use element were studied during the General Plan Consistency Program (AB 283). As the zoning was changed and the text portion left mainly unchanged technically, these plans were amended to be in compliance. As the policies and guidelines were left unchanged, the amendments cannot be considered updates or revisions to the plans. In a community like Venice, zoning was changed to match a plan written in 1970, more than twenty years ago. The plan became consistent with the policies and guidelines that were appropriate decades ago. Because of changes that have occurred during the past twenty years, this plan, while consistent, may not be relevant when compared to today's environment. For these reasons, the adopted date of the last major revision to the plan, not the amended date, is used in our analysis.

**Table 19**  
**Proposed Table of Contents**  
**(Proposed Element and Subtopics shown in italics)**

<u>Existing General Plan Elements</u>	<u>Adoption Date of Last Major Revision</u>	<u>Date of Zoning Consistency Amendment</u>
<u><i>Name of Element</i></u>		
1. <i>Balanced Growth</i>		
Citywide Plan	4/3/74	
Concept Plan	4/3/74	
2. <i>Land Use</i>		
Arleta-Pacoima	6/25/76	1/3/89
Bel Air - Beverly Crest	1/13/77	9/13/83
Boyle Heights	8/14/79	3/2/88
Brentwood-Pacific Palisades	7/27/77	6/25/86
Canoga Park-Winnetka-	10/24/84	2/9/88
Woodland Hills		
Central City	5/2/74	2/12/83
Central City North	2/9/79	1/5/88

<u>Existing General Plan Elements</u>	<u>Adoption Date of Last Major Revision</u>	<u>Date of Zoning Consistency Amendment</u>
Chatsworth-Porter Ranch	3/25/74	12/20/88
Encino-Tarzana	3/10/76	4/21/87
Granada Hills-Knollwood	11/21/74	8/4/87
Harbor Gateway	2/15/79	6/30/87
Hollywood	9/25/87	12/13/88
Mission Hills-Panorama City- Sepulveda	1/7/86	10/13/87
North Hollywood	3/11/75	8/24/88
Northeast Los Angeles	7/3/79	5/6/88
Northridge	2/11/75	6/6/87
Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey	8/25/76	6/9/87
Reseda-West Van Nuys	2/5/85	12/12/86
San Pedro	9/30/80	6/10/86
Sherman Oaks-Studio City- Toluca Lake	11/7/74	8/12/87
Silverlake-Echo Park	2/17/84	3/15/88
South Central Los Angeles	10/26/79	4/11/90
Southeast Los Angeles	1/7/80	1/4/89
Sun Valley	9/23/77	12/14/88
Sunland-Tujunga-Shadow Hills-Lake View Terrace	1/15/80	9/23/87
Sylmar	7/25/74	5/13/87
Van Nuys-N. Sherman Oaks	10/26/77	3/30/90
Venice	10/14/70	11/2/88
West Adams-Baldwin Hills-- Leimert	1/7/80	8/31/88
West Los Angeles	3/21/74	2/24/88
Westchester	7/13/74	5/30/89
Westlake	9/18/74	7/13/88
Westwood	12/17/87	12/17/87
Wilmington-Harbor City	6/26/90	6/26/90
Wilshire	5/17/76	7/13/88
Civic Center Development	3/12/69	
El Pueblo de Los Angeles	6/3/68	
Los Angeles Int'l Airport (Interim)	1/12/81	
Port Of Los Angeles	9/28/82	10/11/88
San Fernando Valley Administrative Center	2/21/84	
West Los Angeles Admin. Center	11/10/74	



<b><u>Existing General Plan Element</u></b>	<b><u>Adopted Date of Last Major Revision</u></b>
<b>3. <i>Air Quality</i></b> Air Quality	3/38/79
<b>4. <i>Transportation</i></b> Bicycle Plan Central City Elevated Pedway Highways and Freeways Map (Note: This is a large map)	7/19/77 4/27/79 1980
<b>5. <i>Housing</i></b> Housing	9/24/86
<b>6. <i>Infrastructure Systems</i></b>	
<b>a. <i>Solid Waste Management</i></b> City Collected Refuse Disposal	1/72
<b>b. <i>Wastewater Management</i></b> Sewage (Waste Water)	11/68
<b>c. <i>Power</i></b> City-Owned Power Transmission Ri...s-of Way Power System	1/2/69 1/2/68 12/21/68
<b>d. <i>Water</i></b> Water System	1/69
<b>e. <i>Flood Control and Drainage</i></b> Drainage	9/68
<b>7. <i>Open Space and Conservation Element</i></b> Conservation Open Space	12/20/73 1973
<b>8. <i>Noise Element</i></b> Noise	9/9/75

<b><u>Existing General Plan Element</u></b>	<b><u>Adopted Date of Last Major Revision</u></b>
<b>9. <i>Public Facilities</i></b>	
<b>a <i>Police</i></b>	Nothing exists now
<b>b <i>Fire</i></b>	Nothing exists now
<b>c <i>Recreation</i></b>	
Equestrian and Hiking Trails	12/31/68
Public Recreation	10/9/80
Amendment to Equestrian & Hiking Trails	12/31/77
Equestrian Trails Northwest Valley	1987
<b>d <i>Schools</i></b>	
Public Schools	11/14/68
<b>e <i>Libraries</i></b>	
Public Libraries	11/4/68
<b>10. <i>Cultural and Design Element</i></b>	
<b>a <i>Historic Preservation</i></b>	
Cultural and Historic Monuments	10/17/68
<b>b <i>Urban Design</i></b>	Nothing exists now
<b>c. <i>Scenic Highways</i></b>	
Scenic Highways	2/23/78
<b>11. <i>Safety Element</i></b>	
Safety	9/19/75
<b>a <i>Wind Hazards</i></b>	Nothing exists now
<b>b <i>Fire Hazards</i></b>	
Fire Protection & Prevention	1/16/79
<b>c <i>Flood Hazards</i></b>	Nothing exists now.



*d Seismic Hazards & other Geologic Hazards*  
Seismic Safety 9/10/75

*e Hazardous Materials* Nothing exists now

*f Recovery & Reconstruction Plan*  
Recovery and 4/10/87  
Reconstruction Planning

## **12. Executive Summary**

The City Attorney believes the Los Angeles General Plan is legally adequate. Nevertheless, it is instructive to review the City's General Plan in the context of state guidelines as well as recent court actions related to general plans.

The major change in California planning and California planning law since 1971, has been the growing importance of the General Plan. The City of Los Angeles is well aware of this through the court mandated actions and AB 283.

The mood of the courts has been stated by David J. Curtin, Jr., in the 1991 edition of California Land Use and Planning Law as follows:

"For the first time since the enactment of California's present planning and zoning scheme, the California Supreme Court has confirmed the general plan as the single most important planning document. In *Citizens of Goleta Valley*, the highest court of the state clearly enunciated that the general plan is the "constitution for all future developments' within the city or county... [Citations omitted.] 'The propriety of virtually any local decision affecting land use and development depends upon consistency with the applicable general plan and its elements.' [Citation omitted.]" The court further stated: "The law also requires that planning efforts remain current. Local agencies must periodically review and revise their general plans as circumstances warrant..."

The appellate courts have also stressed the importance of the general plan as follows:

"...the construction of public improvements must be consistent with the general plan, which is in short, a constitution for all future development within the city." (*Friends of "B" Street vs. City of Hayward*, 1980) - whether charter city or not.

"The General Plan is atop the hierarchy of local government law regulating land use." (Neighborhood Action Group vs. County of Calaveras, 1984)

Features of the general plan have also been litigated, such as:

"..all elements have equal legal status" (Sierra Club vs. Board of Supervisors, 1981)

The penalties for an inadequate general plan are potentially harsh, i.e., stopping development activity or placing planning under the monitoring of the court.

An analysis of the general plan is not a part of this audit of the planning department. However, irrespective of the legal issues, the Plan needs early attention. It's a difficult task for a citizen to obtain a copy of the general plan due to its bulk. Its disjointed format makes it hard to read. An entire copy of the General Plan with all the adopted amendments is not available. As documented in Systems and Mapping, adopted amendments to the community plans are not readily available nor can the City be sure that they know of all other amendments and where they are stored. Generally, accepted concepts of currency call for a revision of the housing element every 5 years. Other elements every 5-10 years. Some of the plan elements are 23 years old with an average age of 16 years.

Because the general plan is so old and requires updating, the department managers prepared the guidelines and directives shown in the following table.

General	Plan	...	...
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...



*Table 20*  
*Draft DCP Guiding Principles or Directives*

1. The existing Centers Concept shall continue to define urban form of the City and should be implemented whenever possible until the adoption of a revised Urban Form Policy.
2. A more equal relationship between jobs and housing should be encouraged and facilitated.
3. Affordable housing should be preserved, rehabilitated, or replaced in kind if demolished to the extent feasible.
4. Housing production, particularly affordable housing, should be encouraged and facilitated.
5. Reinvestment in economically stagnant areas should be encouraged and facilitated.
6. Ensure that new development is supported by adequate infrastructure.
7. Encourage mixed use development in appropriate locations, particularly in areas targeted for higher densities.
8. Public facilities shall be sited as to their need and in a manner to minimize their adverse environmental, social and economic impacts.
9. Locally unacceptable land uses (LULU's) shall be sited to maximize system efficiency, equitable distribution and compatibility.
10. Traffic congestion, as measured in vehicle miles and trips traveled, should be reduced.
11. Land use strategies should be supportive of the regional transportation system.
12. Maximize use of rail and bus transit.
13. Preserve low density neighborhoods where planned.
14. Implementation of mitigation measures rather than payment of mitigation fees should be encouraged.
15. Environmental impacts should be mitigated to the maximum extent possible when siting and approving projects and land uses.

"Conceive good plans - address real problems - write them in a standard way - use clear language - limit them to what can be accomplished."

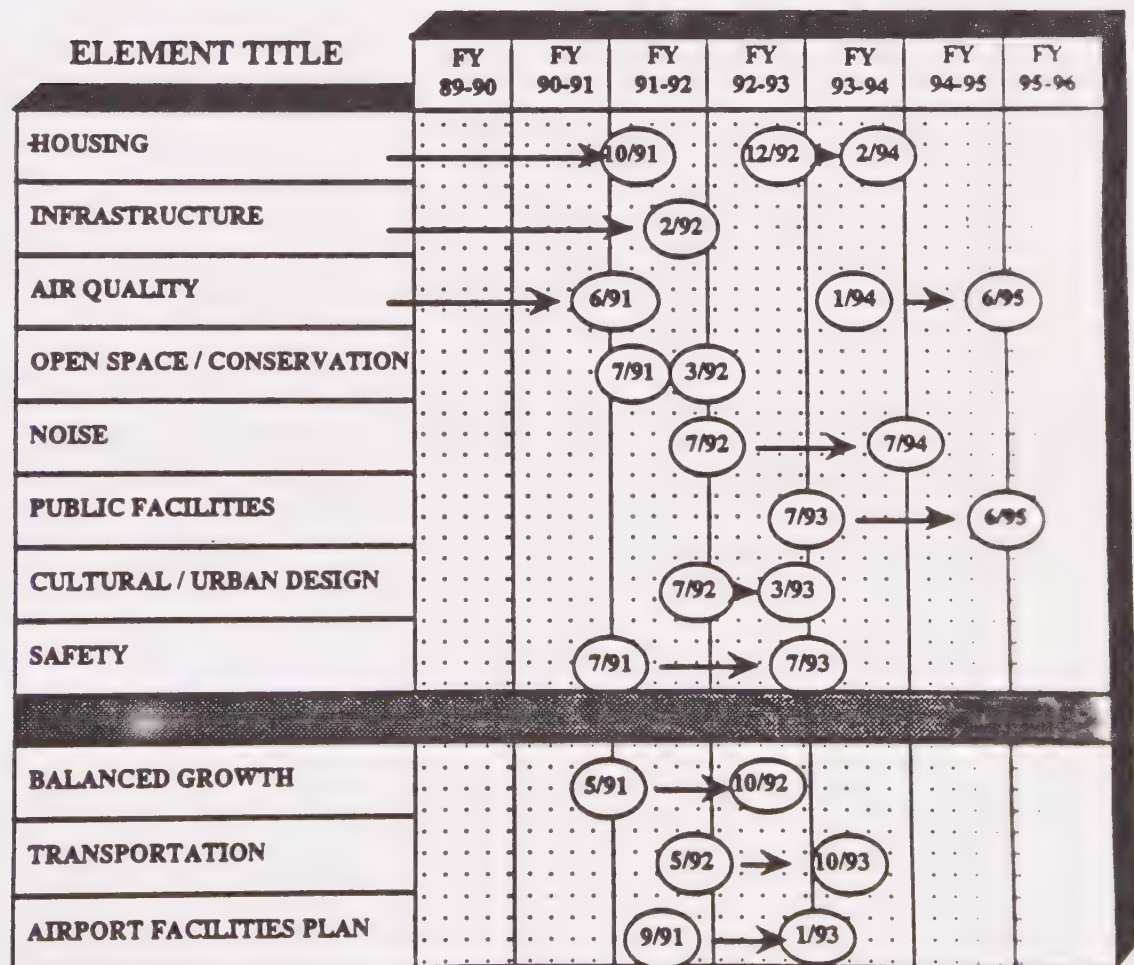
This was an excellent idea and can help set the stage for completion of the city-wide elements. The department managers should be complimented for initiating this effort.

**100. Recommendation:** The 15 Guiding Principles or Directives prepared by department management should be submitted to the Planning Commission for discussion, refinement and adoption. This document should then be sent to the Council and Mayor for adoption as interim city development policy while the general plan is being updated.

**Topic: General Plan Elements - Excluding Land Use**

The current schedule for revising the elements is shown below. For those elements where the arrow begins in the box, the staff writes the element prior to Fiscal Year 1989-1990 (FY89-90). For two elements, Air Quality and Housing, the schedule indicates that these two are statutorily required to be updated on a scheduled basis.

**Figure 11**  
***Published Schedule for Updating the General Plan***  
***(Excluding Land Use)***





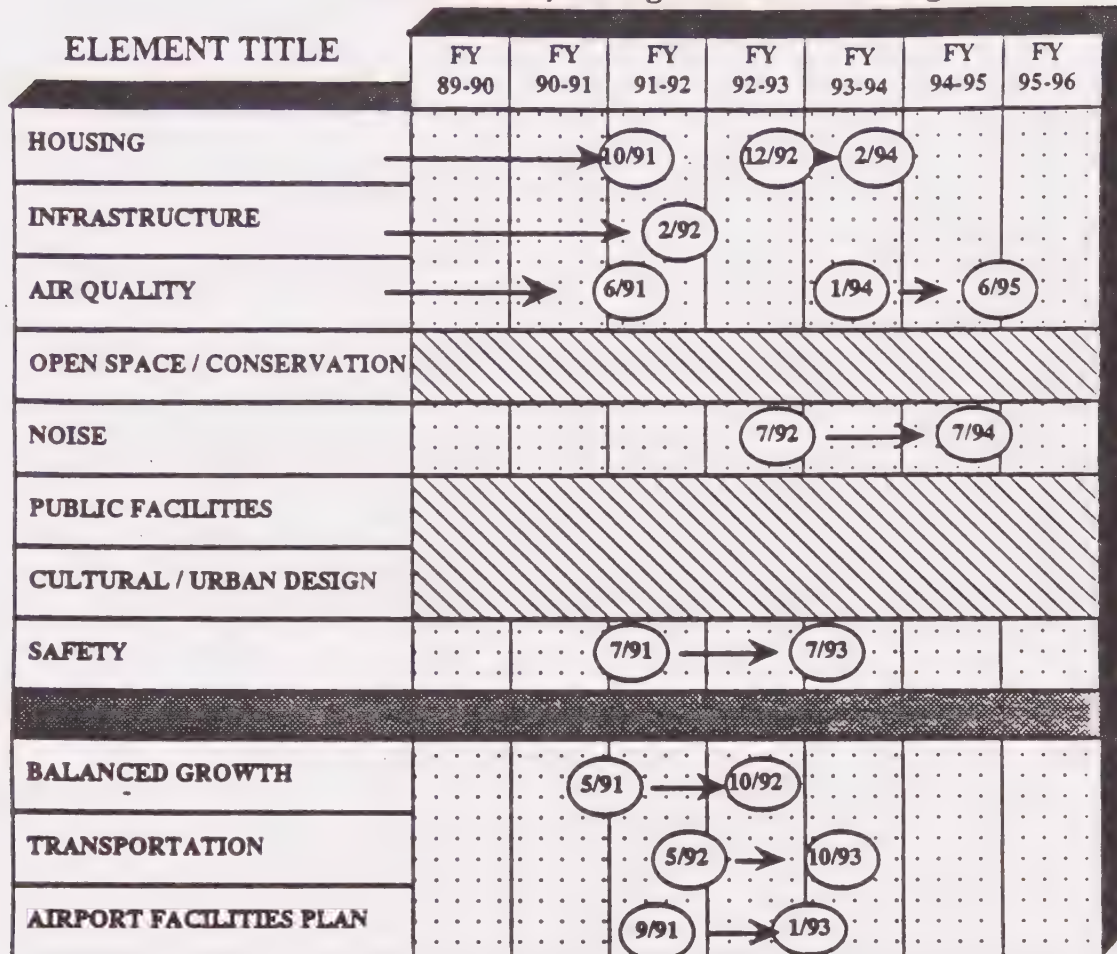
One staff section is responsible for the first eight elements listed above the shaded bar and another section is responsible for the last three. While all elements have a schedule, not all have funding for staff to work on them. There is no current budget nor commitment to work on the following elements:

Open Space/Conservation  
Public Facilities  
Cultural/Urban Design  
Noise  
Some of Safety

In a general sense, the schedule prepared by the Citywide Division does address the concern of having a General Plan that has been outdated. However, concerns were raised during the study. First is the credence and dependence that should be placed in schedules. Departmentally, schedules are relevant only at the time that they are drafted. Responding to external pressures, schedules are changed and resources reallocated. This has the effect of negating schedules and making the scheduled completion dates meaningless. Recent examples of major projects that have become waylaid are, 1) publishing amended community plans resulting from the Zoning Consistency Program and, 2) the current CPR Program including the Transportation modeling and GIS that are linked to it. In a project management environment, due dates are subject to revision, but ultimately management needs to control both the internal and external forces such that the project does get completed according to an acceptable date. The employee questionnaires spoke frequently of the Department needing to define its program and to strive to complete projects according to schedules. Schedules have little credibility with the staff as the schedules are changed so frequently or even just ignored.

A second concern is that programs are scheduled without the budgetary and political commitment needed to insure completion over a multi-year time period. Another concern is the linking of projects such as GIS and the transportation modeling to another program, namely CPR. A schedule more consistent with the allocation of appropriations would be:

**Figure 12**  
**Schedule Reflecting Current Funding**



This figure illustrates that voids remain in the program to update the General Plan. This schedule could be subject to further changes. The contract for Balanced Growth was unsigned as of June 27, 1991, which makes the expected completion date very unlikely given the scope of the effort.

The allocation of filled positions for the elements being revised or written is as follows:

<u>Element</u>	<u>Number of Positions Allocated</u>
Housing	3
Infrastructure	2
Air Quality	4
Balanced Growth	7
Transportation/ Circulation	6
Facilities Master Plan	1
Quality Assurance	4
	<b>36</b>



By State law, the Housing element is to be updated every five years. The last mandated revision date was July 1, 1989. The City missed the deadline and had been working to complete this element by June, 1991. The formation of the Department of Housing Production and Preservation (HPP) has caused a debate as to which department is responsible for establishing housing policy. The differences regarding philosophy between Planning and HPP are significant. HPP's policy would probably cause an EIR to be prepared which would substantially increase the cost and add significant delay to completing this element. This debate has slowed the completion of the Housing element.

At the beginning of this study, the City's low and moderate income housing programs were at a disadvantage for State funding because they were not getting the points possible for a Housing element that is in substantial compliance. Since then, the State has agreed to assign some points, but not the full amount possible. Citywide anticipated beginning to revise the Housing element in 1992 to address known areas needing improvement and having it ready for the mandated due date, 1994. While currently delinquent, the City Attorney believes that the current Housing element is valid.

**The Infrastructure Element includes:**

- Solid Waste
- Water
- Power
- Wastewater
- Flood Control and Drainage
- Pipelines

The staff is currently in the final phase of writing the goals, policies, and objectives for the land use portion of the Solid Waste and Waste Water elements. The Bureau of Sanitation has retained consultants to develop an operating plan and the Bureau wants to insure that the plan is consistent with land use; the General Plan elements will then be a by product of this joint effort. The planning staff work has been in development for two years and should begin the approval process by October, 1991. The staff will begin to work on the other sections starting next fiscal year.

Some progress has been made on the other sections. Citywide has been working to have the Bureau of Engineering help draft the Drainage element. As they have the data, if staff can be allocated, this group could facilitate the Planning Department by preparing a draft. No commitment currently exists. The DWP did commit to drafting the Water and Power sections. They agreed to follow Planning's format for elements. Currently, the text is due, but none has been delivered.

For two years the Air Quality element has been in the process of being revised and the staff has just completed the public hearing. Planning's management changing their internal agreement on the format

of the elements and the development of new departments which then want to add their influence on the development of the element further lengthen the long development cycles. The format was presented to departmental management two years ago and believed to have been accepted, but apparently, is still open to debate. Also, during the last two years, a new department, Environmental Affairs, was formed. During the formation, the Planning Department had wanted the charter to be specific for this new department. All specifics were stricken before the Council approved formation of the new department. Now, there is conflict regarding which department establishes policy. Environmental Affairs believes that they should determine policy and the Planning Department should limit itself to land use. Planning believes that they should establish policy. Regardless, the reopening of issues believed to have been resolved and interdepartmental rivalry impedes an efficient and effective development of General Plan elements.

The Balanced Growth Element is a major effort to develop city-wide policies and it will provide much of the requirements for the Transportation/Circulation Element. The current schedule calls for Balanced Growth to be submitted October, 1992 for adoption. About one year is anticipated for the approval process. This means that Balanced Growth should be adopted by October, 1993.

The Facilities Master Plan has been in process for about two years and the first phase is nearing conclusion with the development and acceptance of the goals and objectives of the plan.

The staff performing quality assurance currently allocates about 95% of their time to support the CPR section. In the next year, the time allocation is expected to become 50% for Balanced Growth and 50% for CPR. Reviewing this with the section head of CPR, the belief is that the deliverables will become standardized and the consultants will better understand the specifics of an acceptable product. Consequently, the time investment in quality assurance can decrease without a commensurate decrease in quality. The planner in charge of the quality assurance function will also begin to assist the section head over Balanced Growth with the design and development of models to assist the research required by this project.

The Transportation group will be involved in the development of this topic for Balanced Growth. Completion of the Balanced Growth Element will satisfy about 80% of the requirements for the Transportation/Circulation Element. The staff will be working to complete the other 20% as well as responding to other project requests.

The analysis and decision making processes in the permitting function as well as in other planning functions, such as neighborhood planning, are operating without current and relevant planning policy. This has resulted in incremental decision making effecting the future of

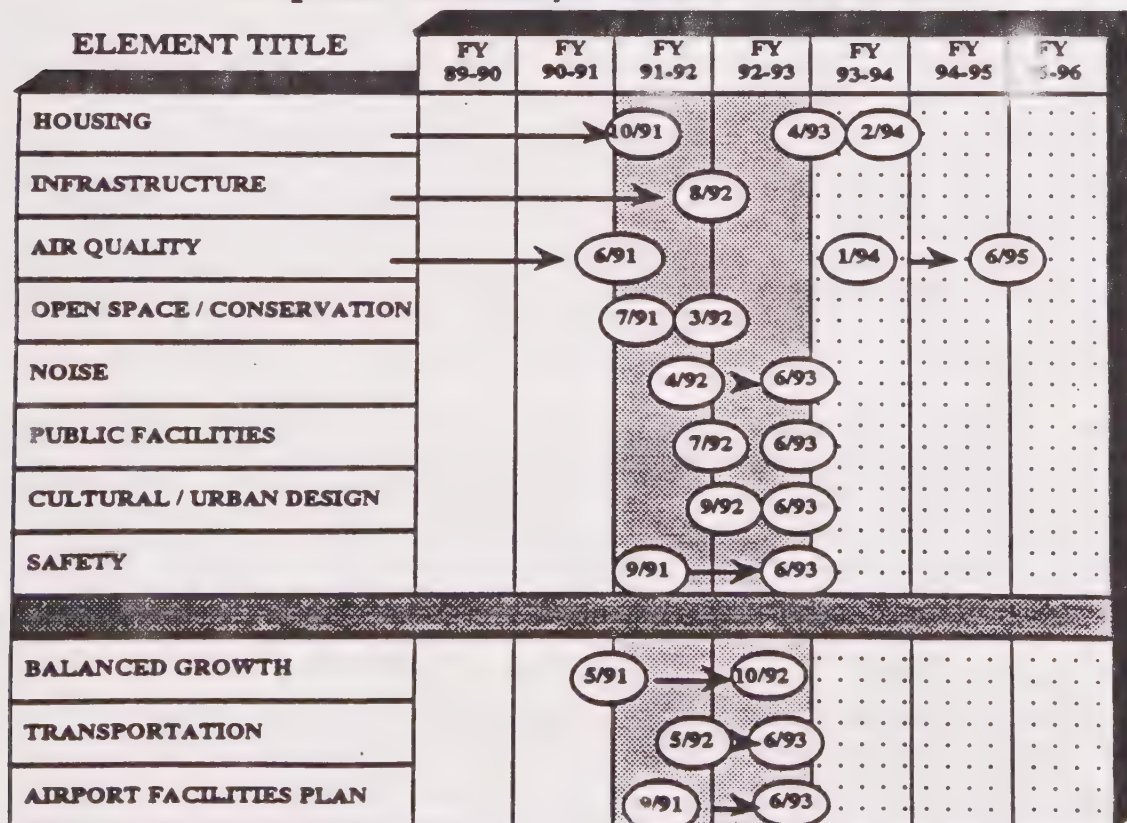


the City without a consistent, guiding planning philosophy. The number of Interim Control Ordinances and Specific Plans indicates the process of an incremental approach that lacks coordination.

**101. Recommendation:** The current effort to complete the Housing element was due July 1, 1989 and has yet to be completed. Because of this, the City is placing in jeopardy its ability to compete for funding for low and moderate income housing. Another revision is due relatively soon, 1994. The debate between which department is responsible is counter productive. Accepted planning philosophy and practice would dictate that this responsibility must rest with the planning department and planning should be the lead. However, we recommend a better approach which would be a joint task force between Planning and Housing to complete the element. This same pattern can also be followed with other elements of the general plan.

**102. Recommendation:** Planning should complete the revisions to the non-land use elements of the General Plan over a two year period. This will provide the greatly needed city-wide planning philosophy needed by the rest of the department and other city departments. A proposed schedule for updating the General Plan in twenty-four months, if initiated this fiscal year, would appear as shown below:

**Figure 13**  
**Proposed Schedule for General Plan Revision**



As proposed, all elements would be revised by the end of June, 1993. If the commitment to update the elements is delayed, the proposed start and finish dates would need to be moved accordingly. When revised, the City would then have a current, relevant General Plan that is needed to insure consistency throughout the planning and permitting processes. This integrates with a later recommendation regarding a two year hiatus for the CPR Program.

The projected funding for this effort is estimated in the table below:

Element Title	FY91-92	FY92-93
Housing	101,843	
Infrastructure	208,377	34,729
Air Quality	58,845	
Open Space / Conservation	229,147	
Noise	54,153	216,613
Public Facilities		305,529
Cultural / Urban Design		229,147
Safety	180,511	216,613
Section A Subtotal	832,876	1,002,631
Balanced Growth	824,524	274,841
Transportation	46,441	278,648
Airport	62,672	75,206
Section C Subtotal	933,637	628,695
Section A & C Subtotal	1,766,513	1,631,326
Consultant Fees		
Noise Element	100,000	
Cultural / Urban Design Element		50,000
Safety Element	150,000	150,000
Balanced Growth Element	3,000,000	1,100,000
Transportation Element	750,000	500,000
Consultant Fee Subtotal	4,000,000	1,800,000
Grand Total	5,766,513	3,431,326

The total for the two years equals \$9,197,839. The funding from others for Balanced Growth, \$4,100,000, reduces the funding to \$5,097,839. In the recommendations for Transportation, Planning should seek the consultant fees of \$1,250,000 from Proposition 111 funds. The remaining balance to fund is then reduced further to \$3,847,839. If no other sources of



funding were secured, the first year budget would be \$2,016,513, or 24.5% more than the FY1990-1991 budgeted amount of \$1,619,236. The second year budget would be \$1,831,326, or 13% more than \$1,619,236.

**103. Recommendation:** The Department should review sources for funding the proposed increase to complete the General Plan through an examination of potential internal and external sources. Depending upon the combination of recommendations implemented, internal resources could be reallocated. The schedule could be lengthened somewhat to reduce the annual funding to smaller amounts for a longer time. Other programs deemed less important could be reduced and budget dollars reallocated. The possibilities are numerous and can only be resolved after acceptance of the report, computation of savings, and prioritizing current programs.

**104. Recommendation:** The Department should adhere to a finalized schedule once the funding and political commitments are secured. As part of proactively defining the work program for Citywide, the management must strive to keep its resources focused on the completion dates prepared as part of the budget justification. Revising the General Plan must be a priority project that the Department is committed to completing and must resist the temptation to draw from these resources when additional work requests are submitted by the City Council or the City Planning Commission. Adhering to schedules will help the department's creditability and the Department's resolve to complete projects.

**105. Recommendation:** Project teams should be used to staff the work plan. These teams would have a singular mission: Complete assigned General Plan elements. This is a project management phrase that applies: Doing drives out planning. The project teams cannot have their focus or efforts diffused by responding to work requests to study other issues. Management must exercise constraint and not draw resources to work on other planning or processing issues. Management must look to other resources within Planning to process only the most important work requests. Peter Drucker, a management theorist, stated, "First things first." For these project teams, the "first thing" must be completing the assigned General Plan elements.

**106. Recommendation:** Elements need to be written with a regional city-wide perspective. The staff should attend workshops to develop a clear understanding of the details that are more appropriately addressed at the community plan level versus the regional, or city-wide, perspective. An emphasis needs to be placed on revising the General Plan at a level of detail appropriate to the regional perspective and consistent with the proposed schedule. Management must be firm in this approach or city-wide elements will not be completed on a timely basis.

**107.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Department should function as a project manager in joint ventures with other City Departments to complete certain revisions to the General Plan. Currently, Planning has involved the Department of Water and Power (DWP) to assist in writing the power and water sections of the Infrastructure Element. Also, the Bureau of Sanitation will be developing most of the Solid Waste Management section. The management should be commended for developing these current joint ventures. The possibilities for additional joint ventures with other departments exist and need to be more formally explored at the director level. Avenues of alternative funding become possible as other departments, such as Environmental Affairs and Housing Production and Preservation, become part of the process.

The organization of the project teams for joint ventures and their schedules needs to be formalized. Delivering agreed upon products according to accepted schedules needs to be a priority. A project manager preferably from Planning, needs to be assigned and given the resources and responsibility relating to the delivery of an element. The project manager should regularly report progress and be accountable for the delivery of products. The Planning Director will need to ensure that other departments meet their commitment to provide mutually agreed upon resources, including staff. The temptation for venture partners who do not have the prime responsibility for completing an element is to "borrow" staffing resources to work on other pressing issues pertinent to their operation. Vigilance is required to insure that the venture partners honor their commitments to provide agreed upon, dedicated resources.

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**Topic:   Balanced Growth Plan**

*Background:* The Balanced Growth Plan is a major effort to develop much needed city-wide general plan policies. It is the first major effort in the last 20 years aimed at establishing the City's vision for the future. The plan is needed to provide the proper policy base prior to amending the community plans. Additionally, the plan will develop a much needed economic/fiscal impact model. The Balanced Growth Plan is a breakthrough for the planning department because it has established a multi-funding proposal that involves other departments, an approach we very much favor.

On the other hand, the department and the City should not underestimate the complexity of the proposed task. There are numerous technical and political problems that can impact this plan. We are also somewhat concerned as to how few people, including managers, in the planning department know anything about the proposed plan. Although briefings have been held, few of the managers have attended.



**108.** *Recommendations:* The Balanced Growth Plan should proceed with the following changes:

- ✓ The plan needs to be simplified and better communicated to the Mayor, Council, citizens and city staff
- ✓ Care should be taken that the modelling process does not overwhelm the policy decision making process.
- ✓ The City Council should be actively involved with the plan each step of the way.
- ✓ The contracts need to be specific to assure that the products will include the general plan elements for city-wide land use policy, transportation policy, air quality, public facilities, and balanced growth.
- ✓ The contract should be carefully monitored to complete this project in 24 months. Staff should also examine the potential to shorten the contract time to 20 months.
- ✓ The department should designate a Senior Planner, AZA or Principle Planner to manage this project on a full time basis. Additionally, consideration should be given to hiring an external individual consultant to assist in management of the project.
- ✓ A staff task force should be assigned to this project. The task force members should continue to remain with the project until its completion. The task force should report directly to the Planning Director or a Deputy Director.

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**Topic: Transportation Element**

**Background:** In 1978, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) was officially formed and among its many responsibilities, it was directed to revise the Transportation Element. In 1987, the element still was not written and by ordinance, the responsibility was transferred to Planning. The Balanced Growth Element and CPR Program are to provide most, but not all, of the Transportation element.

Creating a Transportation element to address the current needs of the City requires transportation models to be developed. They provide an analytical basis for researching the interrelationship of land use to the transportation networks. The City currently does not have the capability to perform the transportation impact analysis and depends upon the developers to perform the analysis for the City. This inherent conflict of interest results in consultant studies that minimize the magnitude of impact on the transportation network.

As a by-product of the CPR Program, two levels of transportation models were to be developed. The most detailed model would be at the community plan level and would be developed as part of the Chapter EIR's (CEIR). The thirty-five Community Plans were grouped into eleven larger areas referred to as Master EIR's (MEIR). The design intent is to have these models interface with the city-wide transportation model to be developed as part of the Balanced Growth Element. When the models are operational, the City, for the first time, would be able to determine a development's impact to the transportation network from the community plan level (CEIR model) to the larger area of the MEIR model to city-wide.

Historically, the City has been able to proceed with the permitting process even though the planning process has lagged. However, recent legislation has caused the formation of an oversight agency that will monitor levels of service within the City. In the transportation arena, the Congestion Management Program (CMP) requires careful management of the permitting process. The CMP represents an important link between land use and air quality policies - a level of accountability that never existed before. The monitoring agency is the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) who will develop its own model; gather its own data; and, monitor levels of service for segments or intersections that are a part of its network. When the LACTC delivers a deficiency report, the City will be required to prepare a deficiency plan (a plan to mitigate the degradation in service levels). The preliminary list of mitigation options that were supplied by the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) included:

- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes
- Park and Ride Lots
- Rail Improvements
- Bus Capital Improvements
- Commuter Bike Lanes
- Trip Demand Management (TDM) strategies

As options, these are expensive indeed. The LACTC will develop a county-wide impact fee program with a list of criteria to insure consistency in the computation of fees. Implementing agencies, like the City, are responsible for collecting these new fees. If the City is unable, or unwilling, to analyze developments' impact and collect the associated fees, then the LACTC will expect the City to provide the equivalent in fees from local funding (general fund dollars) to pay for deficiency plan improvements. The impact of not complying with the CMP would be a notification to the State by the LACTC to withhold apportionment of new gas tax funds. The California Lawmaking Guide, July, 1991, estimates that for Los Angeles County, \$450 million annually in new gas tax will be controlled through CMP. Staff estimates that Los Angeles City would receive about 40%, or about \$180 million.



Continued dependence on developers to quantify the impact of their own developments creates the possibility that the City may under-collect funds and be required to make up the difference with general funds.

With the reduced funding for the CPR Program, the development of the CEIR and MEIR models has stopped and a disagreement regarding consultant fees has arisen. The consultants contend that their fees were contingent upon a more accelerated work program. The City does not yet own the models nor does it have access to them. Left unchanged, when the Balanced Growth Element is completed, the related city-wide transportation model will have limited utility as the more detailed models, the CEIR and MEIR, will not be operational.

The CMP also allows for cities to earn credits for transportation improvements. Credits earned can be used to offset unmitigated trips that would otherwise trigger an assessment of fees, such as increased traffic caused by a Redevelopment area. Credits may also be assigned to desirable, specific developments and they can even be sold to other cities.

**109. Recommendation:** Develop the Transportation models separately from the CPR Program. The CEIR and MEIR models need to be developed and delivered to the City with the vendors also providing training in their use. The City needs to be able to forecast the impact of development on the transportation network so that fees can be computed and collected. The annual audit done by LACTC is an after-the-fact measurement. The City has to be able to forecast and collect fees before development occurs.

As presented in the proposed budget, the detailed models, EIR and MEIR, plus completion of the Transportation element would cost \$1,250,000 for consultants and about \$325,000 for staff, or a total of \$1,575,000. At risk is the annual gas tax revenue of \$180,000,000 per year and the potential to under collect developer fees, leaving the City to fund the shortfall.

Later we recommend that Planning seek Proposition C funds for this effort, including the City staff expense. If unsuccessful, the City should fund this effort.

**110. Recommendation:** When the CEIR, MEIR and city-wide transportation models are completed, this section will have the sophisticated tools for analyzing the transportation impact of a development. Developers should be required to have the Transportation section of Citywide perform, for a fee, the transportation analysis when the models are operational. Accurate analysis and proper computation of development fees is essential if the City is to avoid using the general fund to pay for deficiency plan improvements. This service should be done on a full cost recovery basis.

**111.** *Recommendation:* The opportunity to compile credits needs to be pursued. Through a variety of possible mechanisms to reduce trip demands, credit would be earned and could be applied to other projects where there is less opportunity to mitigate trip impact. As the definition and computation of credits becomes formalized, the City can better assess its opportunities and the value of credits. There are more valid social reasons for engaging trip demand reduction programs than just earning credits under CMP. These are addressed in the topic, Social Planning, also in this section.

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**Topic: Redevelopment**

*Background:* Although the planning department is involved with redevelopment projects, its role appears to be substantially smaller than that experienced in many cities. It is essential that redevelopment projects fit into the broader city planning framework. The inter-relations will become particularly apparent if the city begins works on a downtown plan. Generally speaking, planning should be involved with long-range policy plans, redevelopment with implementation.

**112.** *Recommendation:* The roles and responsibility of who plans and who implements should be clarified between planning and redevelopment. The City Council should engage a study process that would recommend the roles and responsibilities of each. The effectiveness and efficiency of staff will be improved by reducing the effort spent to resolve conflicts regarding policy determination and implementation.

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**Topic: Planning Must Be an Active Player in Transportation Planning**

*Background:* Planning is not adequately involved in the key transportation decisions being made by other agencies, such as LACTC and SCRTD. The LACTC is expected to spent over \$140 billion in the next thirty years. The senior planner over the Transportation section concurs that Planning has not been adequately involved and no other group has represented transportation from the land use side.

Congestion on the street and highway network is a prime concern of the citizenry as evidenced by their approval of additional taxation to pay for infrastructure and transit improvements. As the urban environment has become increasingly developed, purchasing right-of-way and expanding the roads has become less of an option. The traditional approach now puts land used for people to live and to work in conflict with using land for wider streets and highways. People want congestion reduced but no one wants to lose their home to a road construction project.



With the large current and future investments to be made in transit networks, the City has a rare opportunity to effect land use in the siting and transit design phase which is presently occurring. Over the next three to five years, most major design decisions will be made and then, for decades, the effort will be primarily in construction to implement these decisions.

The Metrorail will put three stations on Vermont and three on Wilshire that are not in Community Redevelopment areas. Currently, there is no proactive community land use planning occurring that would provide a basis as to how the area surrounding the stations could best be used and shaped to serve the community. Expansion of light rail transit in the future. Siting of light rail stations with an integrated development plan provides another opportunity to effect significantly the land use of the surrounding area. These are unique opportunities to leverage economic development. The cost benefits are substantially better when integrated planning occurs before these major capital improvements are made versus trying to improve the situation afterwards. The Planning Department has been exploring the possibility of funding specific plans for these stations.

**113. Recommendation:** The Planning Director needs to develop a constituency that will support and expect the Department's active participation in the planning phase with implementing departments and agencies. The Department needs to formalize the planning concepts regarding the interrelationship of transportation planning and land use. Through more effective communication of concepts and potential benefits, as well as the potential problems encountered by not planning, a better understanding of the value of Planning's participation can be developed.

**114. Recommendation:** The Department should examine the possibility of using tax increment financing or other financing such as Proposition A to fund the plans for development projects surrounding those transit stations not currently being addressed by the CRA.

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**Topic: Funding for Models and Transportation Planning**

**Background:** The consultants' and LADOT's staff's contributions on Balanced Growth represents the first major planning work program to be funded by other departments and an outside agency. Planning's staff on Balanced Growth is funded by the general fund. Receiving a major funding commitment from others is a significant accomplishment and the management should be acknowledged for their achievement.

Traditionally, LADOT has had the direct link to funding sources for transportation projects and has made the allocation decisions. For

Balanced Growth, LADOT allocated funds to itself to support additional positions while Planning received none. The general fund is Planning's sole source of appropriations for staff.

Significant alternative sources of funding still lie untapped. The Department has not developed direct relationships to new, potential funding sources, such as LACTC who will collect over \$400 million in the Fiscal Year 1991-92 from Proposition C alone.

**115. Recommendation:** The Planning Department should develop its own direct links to sources of funding. The Department has not historically requested funding from other departments and/or outside agencies for transportation planning. Proposition 111 and C provide emerging opportunities for the funding of needed Transportation plans.

The funding requests should be for the total project cost that includes components, such as, but not limited to: direct costs (planning staff); indirect costs (management, support services); consultants; and, capital investments (computers).

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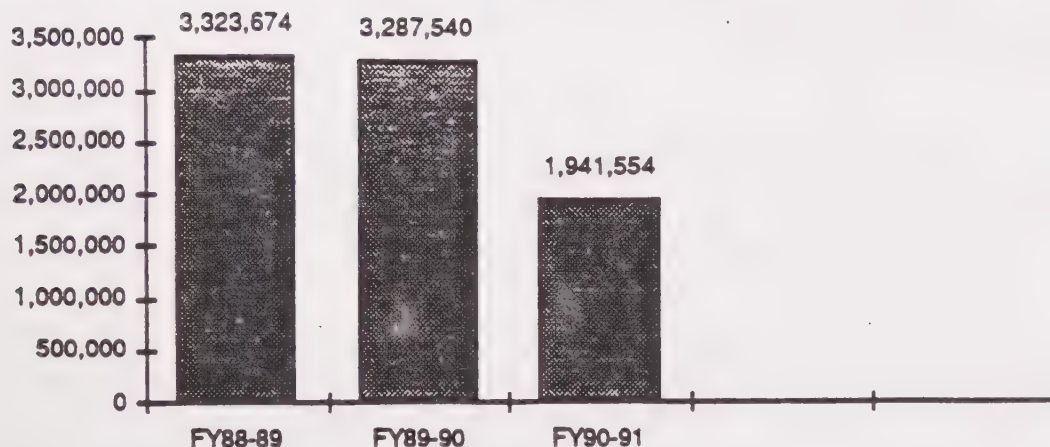
**Topic: Land Use Element - Community Plan Revision (CPR) Program**

**Background:** This section is what remains of a division formed to update the detailed Community Plans throughout the City. Of forty (40) authorized positions, sixteen positions remain. The plan was to start the review of five community plans per year. In a seven year cycle, then, all community plans would be revised. The development of a parcel based, geographic information system was seen as a key element in the viability and maintainability of these plans. With maintenance of the GIS, the accuracy of zoning and land use plans could be maintained.

The budget for the CPR Program has been reduced 42% since FY1988-1989 to the current fiscal year as charted below.



*Figure 14*  
*Funding for CPR*



In 1989, the first four communities were identified and work began on revising their Community Plans. Since then a fifth community was started, North Hollywood. Now, the plan is to continue through completion of the first four. Once the database for North Hollywood is completed, work will stop. Another community, South Central Los Angeles, will then begin. As Southeast Los Angeles is one of the original four, a certain synergy and accumulative benefit is seen if South Central and Southeast Los Angeles are revised concurrently. This may also be indicative of a higher priority area and an important step for planning to look at social/economic issues.

The anticipated cycle time per community was three years. The first four communities should reach completion in 1992. South Central Los Angeles would be completed in 1994 if started this year. As the rate of revising community plans has slowed substantially, community plans for the entire City will not be completed in a seven year cycle as previously planned. The current rate would indicate that more than twenty years would be needed. Given the current age of the community plans, the City will have areas where the plans could grow to be thirty years old or more. As ordinances and specific plans can be spin offs of a revised community plan, the legal services of the City Attorney's office are required. The time required to process these through the City Attorney exacerbates the long revision process.

As the funding has been decreased not only has the staffing been decreased but also the funding for the parcel based, geographic information system. If new community studies are not started, the database is not developed.

The process of developing the revised plans included the formation of Community Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). The CPAC will continue to function even after the associated community plan was finished. This

placed a certain expectation upon the CPR section to continue liaison activity and support for eventually thirty-five CPAC's. This demand on staff appears not to be considered in the staffing plan.

**116.** *Recommendation:* Complete only the community plans already begun. Then a two year hiatus should be given to community plans while the other elements of the General Plan are updated. Then the community plans can be developed within the perspective of a consistent, city-wide plan. Difficult issues, such as waste water treatment, hazardous waste, solid waste, to name a few, needed to be addressed at the city-wide level and consensus developed before developing plans at the community level. A concern voiced by staff was that left unchanged, the last community plan to be revised would have much of the facilities that no one else wanted because the other thirty-four would not allow siting of these facilities in their communities. While the concern is somewhat extreme, it does have a tinge of truth given the City's incremental, localized approach to planning.

**117.** *Recommendation:* After the two year hiatus, the resources dedicated to the General Plan would be shifted to Community Plans. The proposed schedule for revising the community plans would have five plans revised per year with all plans updated after seven years. The seven year cycle would continue indefinitely. Whereas 20% of the current plans are seven years old or less, the goal would be that 100% of the plans would be no older than seven years.

Priorities regarding the areas to be studied need to be closely analyzed so that the scope of the revision is consistent with the one year time frame allowed for the staff work. With a more frequent revision cycle, plans do not become as outdated requiring massive analysis to become current. The present average cycle time is about thirteen years.

The following is an approximation of the anticipated expense to complete the staff work for a community plan in one year and coordinate the approval process through the second year. The staffing allocation is done as a percentages of a work year. A senior planner would supervise the staff revising five community plans and is 20% allocated to the development of each plan during the first year. One city planner, two associates and two assistant planners would be dedicated full time for one year and expected to complete the staff work. In the second year all percentages decrease substantially as the community plan is guided through the public workshops and subsequent approval steps. the average community plan area has a population of 99,583. The largest area by population has 271,631 and the smallest has 14,551. Twelve of thirty-five, or 34%, are larger than the average; 66% are smaller. There are counterbalancing reasons for adjusting the estimates either up or down. The project teams' responsibilities would be expanded to include the quality control function performed by staff that is now part of the Balanced Growth



Element. Over the life of the project, though, less effort should be required for quality control as the specifics of the consultants' deliverables becomes better understood by everyone concerned. Because of certain factors, such as size, population, land use issues, certain areas would probably cost less, but inflation is not built into the estimates. The following table presents the assumptions regarding the costs to prepare one community plan.

**Table 21**  
**Cost Estimate for One Community Plan**

STAFFING	YR 1	YR 2	BURDEN FACTOR	ANNUAL SALARY	YEAR 1 COSTS	YEAR 2 COSTS
SR CITY PLANNER	0.2	0.05	1.15	68,904	15,848	3,962
CITY PLANNER	1	0.1	1.15	58,506	67,282	7,924
ASSOCIATE	2	0.2	1.15	49,632	114,154	15,848
ASSISTANT	2	0.2	1.15	42,240	97,152	15,848
ADMIN SUPPORT	0.5	0.1	1.15	25,000	14,375	7,924
STAFFING SUBTOTAL					308,810	51,506
CONSULTANTS						
HISTORICAL					50,000	
URBAN DESIGN					30,000	
MIER					200,000	
CEIR					100,000	
CONSULTANT SUBTOTAL					380,000	
GRAND TOTAL					\$688,810	\$51,506

The next table then projects this cost of completing one plan to the annual cost of completing five community plans per year for seven years.

**Table 22**  
**Estimated Annual Costs to Complete  
Thirty-five Community Plans in Seven Years**

Budget For Community Plans	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
1	\$688,810	\$51,506					
2	688,810	51,506					
3	688,810	51,506					
4	688,810	51,506					
5	688,810	51,506					
6		688,810	\$51,506				

Budget For Community Plans	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
7		688,810	51,506				
8		688,810	51,506				
9		688,810	51,506				
10		688,810	51,506				
11			688,810	\$51,506			
12			688,810	51,506			
13			688,810	51,506			
14			688,810	51,506			
15			688,810	51,506			
16				688,810	\$51,506		
17				688,810	51,506		
18				688,810	51,506		
19				688,810	51,506		
20				688,810	51,506		
21					688,810	\$51,506	
22					688,810	51,506	
23					688,810	51,506	
24					688,810	51,506	
25					688,810	51,506	
26						688,810	\$51,506
27						688,810	51,506
28						688,810	51,506
29						688,810	51,506
30						688,810	51,506
31							688,810
32							688,810
33							688,810
34							688,810
35							688,810
Yearly Total	\$3,444,052	\$3,701,581	\$3,701,581	\$3,701,581	\$3,701,581	\$3,701,581	\$3,701,581

The annual budget in FY88-89 and FY89-90 for CPR was approximately \$3.3 million. The projected estimates here are close to those amounts. However, the City's former estimates for the cost to revise a community plan appear to be conservative as the number of years to complete each will take longer based upon actual results to-date. In short, taking longer makes each more expensive. This makes it harder to compare historical costs to the proposed schedule. The schedule of five per year must be a priority and resources should not be pulled away.

When the General Plan is revised, staff and budget dollars can be reallocated to the CPR Program.



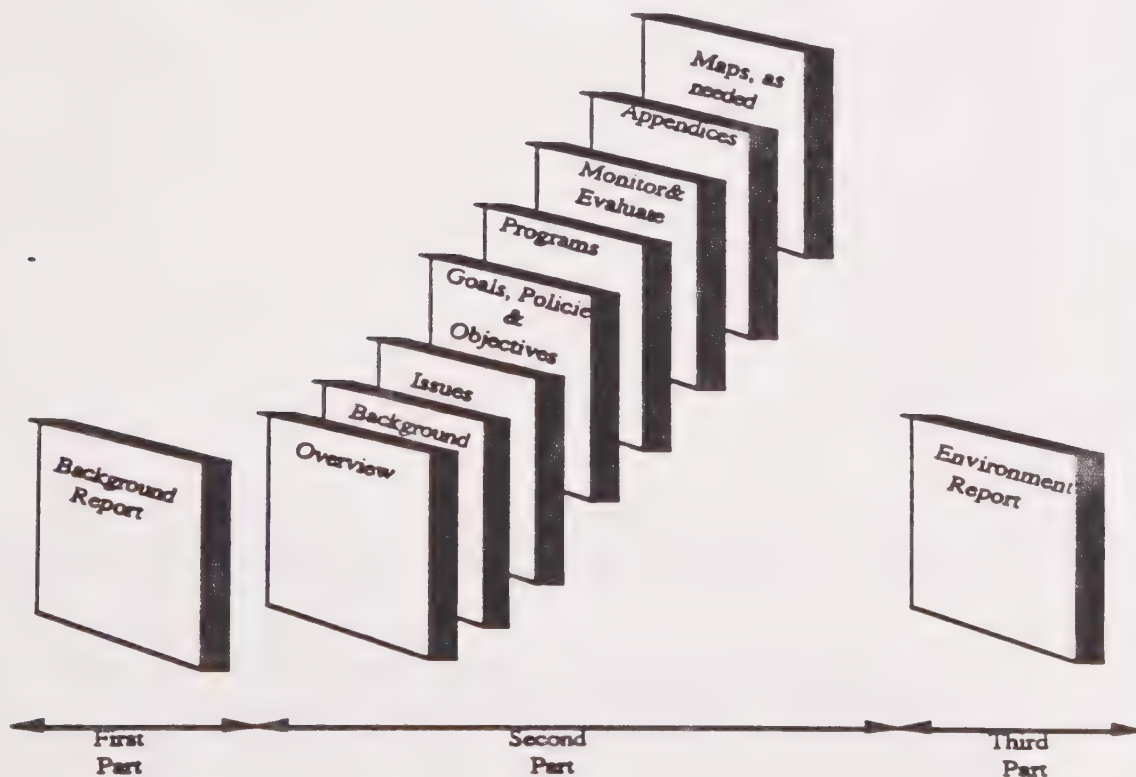
**118. Recommendation:** The Department should review in detail the approach it is using to complete community plans. The goal should be to reduce the average cost to \$500,000 each. Consideration should be given to completing the environmental impact reports by staff rather than by consultants which should result in a cost savings.

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**Topic: Format of General Plan Elements**

**Background:** Each element consists of three separate documents: Background Report, The Element, and the Environmental Document. The organization for the Element had been proposed as follows:

**Figure 15**  
*Documents and Structure of General Plan Elements*



The staff has worked for months to complete the Housing and Air Quality Elements. As completion approached, there occurred both intra- and interdepartmental discussions as to the desired organization of an element. The staff was delayed and frustrated by the reopening what was considered a closed issue.

**119.** *Recommendation:* Finalize the format and do not reopen this issue until all elements are revised. The format is not the sole determinate impacting staff effectiveness; however, they cannot be nearly as effective if there is doubt as to how to frame their research and recommendations. While a number of formats and organizations of elements are possible, the current format is acceptable. Regardless, Planning needs to achieve internal consensus on its format. With this in hand, the Department needs to achieve external consensus and make only those changes to format that are legitimate and do not compromise the integrity of the product. A common format is also essential to assist citizens and policy makers in understanding the plan.

**120.** *Recommendation:* Because of the size and complexity of the City of Los Angeles, there is a tendency for the General Plan to become large and complex. However, in order to be useful for citizens and policy makers the plan should be as short as possible. We recommend that the department review the writing of documents to make them as short and concise as possible. Additionally, some consideration should be given to determining which of the documents shown in Figure 15 actually should be adopted as part of the plan. It may be appropriate to only adopt a brief background statement along with goals, policies and maps. All the other items could be simply background or adopted, but not as part of the official plan.

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**Topic: General Plan Advisory Board (GPAB)**

*Background:* The General Plan Advisory Board (GPAB) was created to advise and assist the Director of Planning in preparation of the General Plan and amendments to the Plan. The GPAB consists of representatives from 18 of the various departments throughout the City including: Airports; Building and Safety; Chief Legislative Analyst's Office, Chief Administrative Officer's Office; City Engineer; Community Development; Community Redevelopment Agency; City Council; Fire; Harbor; Housing Authority; Mayor's Office; Planning; Police; Public Works; Transportation; Recreation and Parks; and, Water and Power. Each of these departments has one member designated to the GPAB and also has a second and third substitute approved as a stand-in for the original member.

The GPAB also has four standing committees: City Boundaries Committee; Transportation Committee; Service Systems Committee; and, the Planning Issues and Implementation Committee. These committees will make recommendations to the full GPAB as they apply to items on the GPAB working agenda. The GPAB meets on the third Wednesday of each month in Room 540 at City Hall from 1:30p.m. until approximately 3:00p.m. Over the past three years there have been an average of 10 meetings per year with 2 of the monthly meetings being cancelled for one reason or another. During this period there has also been an average of one



two special meetings of the GPAB called due to the lack of a quorum at the previously regularly scheduled meetings. An attendance of at least five members is required to achieve a quorum and vote and approve or disapprove items on the agenda.

Table 23 on the following page presents the attendance history of GPAB meetings by department and as a whole for the past three years. As we will note, overall attendance at meetings during this period has been only 63% of full attendance, barely enough to achieve a quorum on a regular basis. Certain departments have historically shown little interest in attending GPAB meetings, particularly the Mayor's Office (0%), City Council (14%), Housing Authority (17%), and Public Works (31%). We believe that poor attendance may in large part be due to the changed nature of the GPAB's work from its original intent.

An examination of GPAB meeting agendas reveals that more than 50% of the items on the agenda involve Periodic Plan Reviews, while approximately 40% of the items involve Amendments to specific or community plans. Upon examination of the minutes and tape recorded proceedings of the meetings we found that the typical discussion revolves around staff reports concerning specific planning cases which come under review. Most of the cases concern zoning regulations under the specific, community or general plans and the majority of items are initiated by City Council. The GPAB hears relevant materials regarding the cases and renders approval or disapproval of cases. In essence, the GPAB is not proactively examining the General Plan and community plans but amending or revising them as cases involving that particular area arise. They are reactive and serve a function of a hearing board for land use instead of advising and assisting in the preparation of the General Plan and community plans.

Given the decentralized nature of the Los Angeles government and lack of clear management ties between various departments, the GPAB is an essential and important Board. Problems from the planning department's perspective include:

1. Some members feel that they are only a "rubber stamp".
2. Attendance is pushed to a staff person who is not in a position to commit for the department. Some departments rarely attend at all.
3. There is a lack of communication and interaction between the GPAB member and staff of their own departments who are working with and coordinating the projects with planning staff. This results in the GPAB members not being aware, at times, that their department staffs have already "bought off on" the project.
4. GPAB review comes too late in the process for most projects.

**Table 23**  
**City of Los Angeles Planning Department**  
**General Plan Advisory Board**  
**Analysis of Regular Attendance 1988-90**

Department	1/88-6/89	Percentage of All Meetings	7/89-1/90	Percentage of All Meetings	5/90-4/91	Percentage of All Meetings	All Periods	Percentage of All Meetings
1 Airports	14	74%	3	75%	7	58%	24	69%
2 Building & Safety	17	89%	4	100%	10	83%	31	89%
3 CLA's Office	17	89%	4	100%	8	67%	29	83%
4 CAO's Office	15	79%	2	50%	8	67%	25	71%
5 City Engineer	18	95%	4	100%	10	83%	32	91%
6 CDD	15	79%	4	100%	5	42%	24	69%
7 CRA	12	63%	3	75%	6	50%	21	60%
8 Council	0	0%	1	25%	4	33%	5	14%
9 Fire	18	95%	4	100%	9	75%	31	89%
10 Harbor	5	26%	2	50%	0	0%	7	20%
11 Housing Authority	4	21%	0	0%	2	17%	6	17%
12 Mayor	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
13 Planning	19	100%	4	100%	12	100%	35	100%
14 Police	11	58%	4	100%	8	67%	23	66%
15 Public Works	7	37%	1	25%	3	25%	11	31%
16 Transportation	18	95%	4	100%	11	92%	33	94%
17 Rec. & Parks	17	89%	4	100%	12	100%	33	94%
18 Water & Power	17	89%	4	100%	9	75%	30	86%
Average Attendances	12	65%	3	72%	7	57%	22	63%



5. There is little or no interest on the part of General Managers.
6. There is little or no commitment to implementing the General Plan.
7. Often the GPAB recommendations are not passed on to the Planning Commission in the most effective form.
8. Every time a "new face" comes to a meeting, issues that have been previously agreed upon and laid to rest are reopened.
9. GPAB spends too much time dealing with projects and too little time dealing with major policy issue.
10. It is difficult to obtain a quorum.

These are serious concerns that require early attention. Additionally, the planning department's deputy who coordinates and often chairs GPAB has indicated that she cannot agree on a matter at GPAB and know for sure that the department management will back the item.

**121. Recommendation:** The planning department should launch a renewed effort to restructure and revitalize the GPAB. This may require the Planning Director to personally meet with General Managers of GPAB departments. Such restructuring should include amongst other items:

- ✓ Whoever chairs GPAB meetings for the Planning Director must have the authority to speak for the Director.
- ✓ A sign off system should be developed for routine items that would not need to go on an agenda.
- ✓ A greater use of sub-committees or task forces on specific projects should be used.

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**122. Recommendation:** The General Plan Advisory Board should re-focus on their original mission which, as stated, is to advise and assist the Director of Planning in preparation of the General Plan and amendments to the Plan.

As we discussed above the GPAB's original function has changed considerably since its creation. There are other divisions and boards within the Planning Department which are more functionally aligned to provide the kind of land use hearing service which currently consumes most of the GPAB's time and efforts. GPAB meetings should concentrate on overarching, city wide planning issues which require the input of all

departments. Their agenda should focus around the discussion of new laws or ordinances which may affect the City and whether planned development under examination in the Planning Department fits with the current General Plan and community plans.

**123.** *Recommendation:* Attendance at the GPAB monthly meeting should be mandatory. If the official member is unable to attend, then that particular department should provide that one of the substitutes attend in their place. The General Plan is a planning document which, as discussed throughout this report, should reflect not only the Planning Department's land use view of Los Angeles, but the entire City's land use, economic, and social plan for a livable city. Therefore, input from all the GPAB member departments is vital if the General Plan is to reflect this overall City view.

- ✓ All GPAB members should adhere to the city ordinance which requires that any alternatives to the GPAB members, "has the authority to speak for and commit for his or her respective department, office or agency".

**124.** *Recommendation:* The General Plan Advisory Board should create and approve a GPAB agenda for the year at the first meeting of each fiscal year. This agenda should outline the subject areas that they will address as advisors to the Director of Planning in terms of revising or amending the General Plan. The establishment of an agenda should be undertaken with coordination between the GPAB and the Citywide Division. The Citywide Division, as it is recommended in previous topics, will review each of the elements of the General Plan and the 35 individual Community Plans on a regularly scheduled basis. GPAB should coordinate their agenda to coincide with the areas of the General Plan which are under review in the Citywide Division at that time.

In this manner, the GPAB will be in a position to provide input, debate and advice to the Director of Planning as regards revisions or amendments to the General Plan. In essence, the GPAB would fulfill its original function.

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**Topic: Department of Environmental Affairs**

*Background:* Two years ago the city created a Department of Environmental Affairs. The purpose of the department as defined by ordinance is to:

- a. Be primarily responsible for recommending city-wide environmental policies;
- b. Implement adopted policies and programs;
- c. Represent the city on environmental issues;



- d. Coordinate the review of environmental documents affecting more than one city department or agency;
- e. Establish an information clearinghouse.

While we applaud the city's efforts toward a greater focus on the environment, the purposes assigned to this department can lead to an additional erosion of a sound planning function in the city. Environmental policy planning is an essential function which is normally integral to the planning department. Additionally, planning departments are normally the focus for environmental impact review.

**125. Recommendation:** The planning department should work closely with the Department of Environmental Affairs to determine respective roles and responsibilities. We suggest the following guidelines for this effort:

- ✓ The Department of Environmental Affairs should move its focus to operational and implementation issues, (paragraphs 'b', 'c', and 'e' above) the planning department to policy issues, (paragraph 'a' above).
- ✓ The two departments should consider joint task forces for certain study items. For example, we understand the Department of Environmental Affairs wants to do an inventory of sensitive habitats. Such a study should be done on a joint basis and must be incorporated into the city general plan.
- ✓ City-wide environmental review policy (paragraph 'd' above) should be established by the planning department, not the Department of Environmental Affairs. City projects should be required to meet the same environmental policy standards that private development projects are subjected to. Since private projects are reviewed by the planning department, it is the logical place to set consistent city-wide policy.

**126. Recommendation:** City Ordinance 165009 should be amended to implement the recommendations above.

**Topic: Research and Development**

**Background:** A planning department's function is to impact current decisions being made in the City from a long term perspective. Essential to the development of such a perspective is a solid research function. This was well stated by the peer review panel as follow:

"I believe a department this size needs a much stronger applied research and analysis capability. This should include demographics, housing, economic and human development data and analysis. One purpose of this is to become respected as a source of good information. Contrary to conventional wisdom, politicians do respect and like information if it is relevant and presented well and briefly. Furthermore, this information is necessary because a successful planning department must understand how the city is changing, which issues are most likely to effect the future well-being of the city, and have an accurate policy sense of how to deal with those issues. This is the heart of what a planning department is about."

The Los Angeles planning department is severely lacking in its research function. For example, it in theory has an economic and statistical analysis function but it has never been staffed. The economist position was deleted from the current budget.

The Citywide Division does not perform any modeling itself nor has it the hardware and software for demographic and/or economic research. These latter process are performed by the staff in the Systems and Mapping Division.

For all sections, improved access to research tools would enhance productivity. Each section could utilize a parcel based, geographic information system. Other automated research tools are missing. One study required an analysis of poor housing conditions. As so little data was available for automated statistical analysis, the criteria selected to be indicative of poor housing were:

1. Age of the housing
2. Number of permits for alterations

The older the housing and the more frequent the alterations, the poorer the condition of the housing. The staff admitted that the criteria had its problems, but they had nothing else to use. In another study, the research on coastal housing construction was done by manually researching log and files.

The division would seem to have substantial unmet needs for statistical research across a broad spectrum of issues.

For example, the economist position in city-wide was authorized but then frozen. The four research and demographic positions in Systems and Mapping have only been at 50% staffing. Two positions have remained unstaffed. Currently the department has no staffing or routine access to biologists, economists, archaeologists to name a few. Our fact finding also indicates that the department has had few to none of the analytical tools and models needed rationally to justify planning and permitting processes.



Staff's access to computers is limited and modeling capability typically found in large agencies does not exist.

Addressing the increasing complex issues of a developed and rapidly changing urban environment is being done using traditional planning methodologies and contracting with consultants to provide greater analytical skills. Unfortunately, recent history suggests that reduced funding has caused much of the consultant's work to be slowed or stopped completely. Left unchanged, the department's evolving sophistication will be slowed and in some areas like detailed transportation models, nearly stopped.

**127. Recommendation:** The Planning Department should strengthen its research functions. At the minimum this should include the hiring of

- a. High level economist
- b. Demographer
- c. Sociologist

These positions should be placed in the City-wide Planning division where they can reinforce city-wide policy planning. Other divisions can draw on this technical expertise for advice as needed. If not staff positions, the department should have contracts that allow access to other specialists on an as needed basis in order to avoid contracting for each need or occurrence.

**128. Recommendation:** The Planning Department as part of a recommended strategic information analysis should identify the analytical tools its needs to perform thorough, competent, and timely research. The city-wide planning process will require increasingly sophisticated levels of information processing and presentation in order to address a rapidly changing urban environment. The models would include, but are not limited to:

Transportation  
Economic  
Demographic

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**Topic:** Social/Economic Issues

**Background:** Although city planning is primarily based on the planning of the physical city there needs to be a concern for all aspects of the community. This was stated by a member of the peer panel as follows:

"Like almost every other central city, your future is tied to the well being of your residents. I believe central cities' planning must devote much more time and insight to the fundamental issues of

poverty, race, education, and employment. A key issue in neighborhood planning is how well are the people doing in this neighborhood. Are kids growing up here likely to do well? If not, why not? This type of planning will probably lead to more involvement with basic city services and human services than planners are accustomed. However, this is necessary if the planning department wants to influence the issues that most effect the future well being of the city."

A recent study by UCLA called "The Widening Divide" also highlighted the same point as follows:

"The problems of the new poverty pose a major challenge to our profession. The goal of greater social fairness must be an integral part of our plans and planning processes. As we move into an era of managed growth, we must think creatively about how best to direct our resources to build new opportunities for people and neighborhoods on the margin. There must be a renewed commitment to community development, which focuses on increasing employment opportunities, strengthening social institutions and empowering people. The cost of not doing so will be high - cities permanently and deeply divided along economic and social lines."

The social problems of Los Angeles are also well publicized in the press. Many of the main problems of the City are people problems, i.e. education, crime, poverty, housing, jobs, and the like. City planning should bring its particular expertise to assist others in the city on analyzing these problems.

The department has recently allocated some resources and modified work programs to address planning needs in areas that traditionally have received fewer resources. For example, Southeast Los Angeles, South Central Los Angeles, and West Adams.

Also, the department has allowed a group of planners who voluntarily offered to focus on these study areas to work 20% of their hours in these areas. The desire is that these planners, many of whom are minorities themselves, will develop programs that address the special needs of the people and environment of these predominantly minority populated communities.

**129. Recommendation:** The planning department should begin a small scale effort (one or two staff) to develop additional approaches to giving increased attention to social issues. Such an approach could vary between developing new social criteria to be used in discretionary permit processing or developing new criteria for community plans. It could also prove desirable to prepare a social/economic element to the General Plan. Such non-mandatory elements are provided for in the City Charter upon action by the City Council.



**Topic: Code Studies**

**Background:** The City's Zoning Ordinance is a confusing document that has developed over many years. Although the ordinance needs a major rewrite, this would be a massive undertaking and should not be attempted until the General Plan is up-to-date.

In the interim, numerous changes should be made to simplify the code and clarify policy. However, there is no structure for determining priorities nor a process to achieve concurrence on priorities. As a result, the newest, hottest study displaces the work being done on the current inventory of studies.

This section reported 87 total projects in January, 1991. A number of years ago the Department would approach the Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) committee for priorities. As the work demands exceeded the capacity of the staff, the section wanted to know the priorities for the current and new work items. This process has apparently stopped. Now, there are no priorities. This causes the staff to direct their efforts to other work projects while not necessarily finishing work in process.

The senior planner in charge of this section made the following time estimates to complete the first six steps in code studies:

<u>Task Completion</u>	<u>Level of Difficulty</u>	<u>Months to Complete</u>
1 through 6	Easy	6
	Moderately Difficult	9
	Very Difficult	12

Another three to six months is required to get it to the City Attorney. Draft ordinances can take one or two years to be reviewed and redrafted by the City Attorney's office. This makes the completion time, by level of difficulty, from beginning to end to be:

<u>Level of Difficulty</u>	<u>Time Required For Completion</u>
Easy	2 Years
Medium	2.5 Years
Difficult	3.5 Years

The current inventory of studies was reviewed by the section head. The Eighty-seven studies were ranked by level of difficulty and the following work profile was developed:

<u>Level of Difficulty</u>	<u>Volume of Studies</u>
Easy	10
Medium	49
Difficult	28
Total	87

There are relatively few "easy" studies in-house. Most will require 2.5 to 3.5 years to be completed.

**130. Recommendation:** The Department should proactively develop its work program and complete priority code studies before initiating additional studies.

**131. Recommendation:** Code Studies should be reassigned to the Zoning Administration Division.

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**Topic: Citizen Advisory Committee**

**Background:** The city has appointed four permanent Citizen Planning Advisory Committees (CPAC's) in four community planning areas. The long term goal is to have a committee in each of the 35 planning areas. In a city as large and complex as Los Angeles, we believe the use of these citizen committees is essential. Nevertheless, a number of problems and cautions are useful at this early stage of creating committees.

In our interviews, citizens indicated their desire for these committees to be elected; however, council members indicated strong opposition to this idea. We believe the committee can function either way. If they are to be appointed, council should attempt to appoint a diverse representation of the entire community. Elected committees are working well in a variety of communities, for example, both the City of San Diego and San Diego County.

Citizen committees can be very costly and also substantially slow down the planning process. This can be avoided by obtaining absolute clarity as to the role of the committees.

**132. Recommendation:** Citizen advisory committees should be appointed and/or elected in all community planning areas. Such committees shall be advisory to staff and the council but in no way should be controlling or directing staff. We envision roughly 10% of a person's staff time per committee at an annual cost of \$7,000 each.

**133. Recommendation:** Timelines for plan or permit processes must be respected by the citizen committees. If they cannot act in a timely manner, the plan or permit should proceed without their recommendation.



**134.** *Recommendation:* The citizen committee should be the focus for all planning action in the community planning area. If other groups are needed such as design review boards, they should be subcommittees of the citizen committee.

**135** *Recommendation:* The planning department should develop an education process for citizen committees. A good example to follow is that used in the City of San Diego.

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## VI. DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN DIVISION

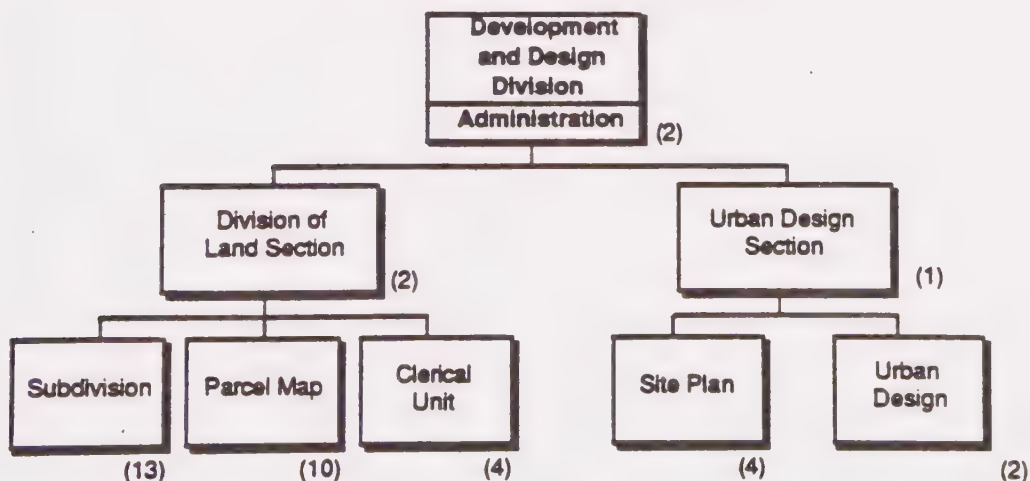
### OVERVIEW

The Development and Design Division is an internal organization unit within the Planning Department. This Division is responsible for receiving, analyzing, and approving the division of land in the City of Los Angeles in accordance with Sections 17 and 18 of the Los Angeles Planning and Zoning Code, State of California Subdivision Map Act, and the various elements of the City's General and specific plans. The Division also processes zone changes and other cases related to a division of land and the processing of parcel map violations, certificates of compliance and lot line adjustments.

The Development and Design Division also conducts site plan reviews for certain development projects to promote orderly development, evaluate and mitigate significant environmental impacts, and promote public safety and the general welfare by ensuring that development projects are properly related to their sites, surrounding properties, traffic circulation, sewers, other infrastructure and environmental setting; and to control or mitigate the development of projects which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment as identified in the City's environmental review process.

As shown in Figure 16 below, the Division is organized into six operating units with an authorized staffing of 41 positions.

**Figure 16**  
**Division Organization Chart**



The staffing of the two sections has increased in recent years, as shown in Table 24 addresses the increase in new applications for subdivision and parcel map cases and staff the new functions and duties involved in site plan review.



**Table 24**  
**Historical Staffing Levels**

	<u>FY90-91</u>	<u>FY89-90</u>	<u>FY88-89</u>	<u>FY87-88</u>	<u>FY86-87</u>
	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Auth</u>
Principal City Planner	1	-	-	-	-
Assoc. Zoning Administrator	1	1	1	1	1
Senior City Planner	1	1	1	1	1
City Planner	7	3	3	3	3
Urban Design Planner	1				
City Planning Associate	13	6	6	6	5
Planning Assistant	7	5	5	5	6
Senior Clerk Typist	3	1	1	1	1
Clerk Typist	3	1	2	2	2
Secretary	1	1	1	1	1
Associate Architect	1				
Landscape Architectural Assoc.	1				
Total	<u>40</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>

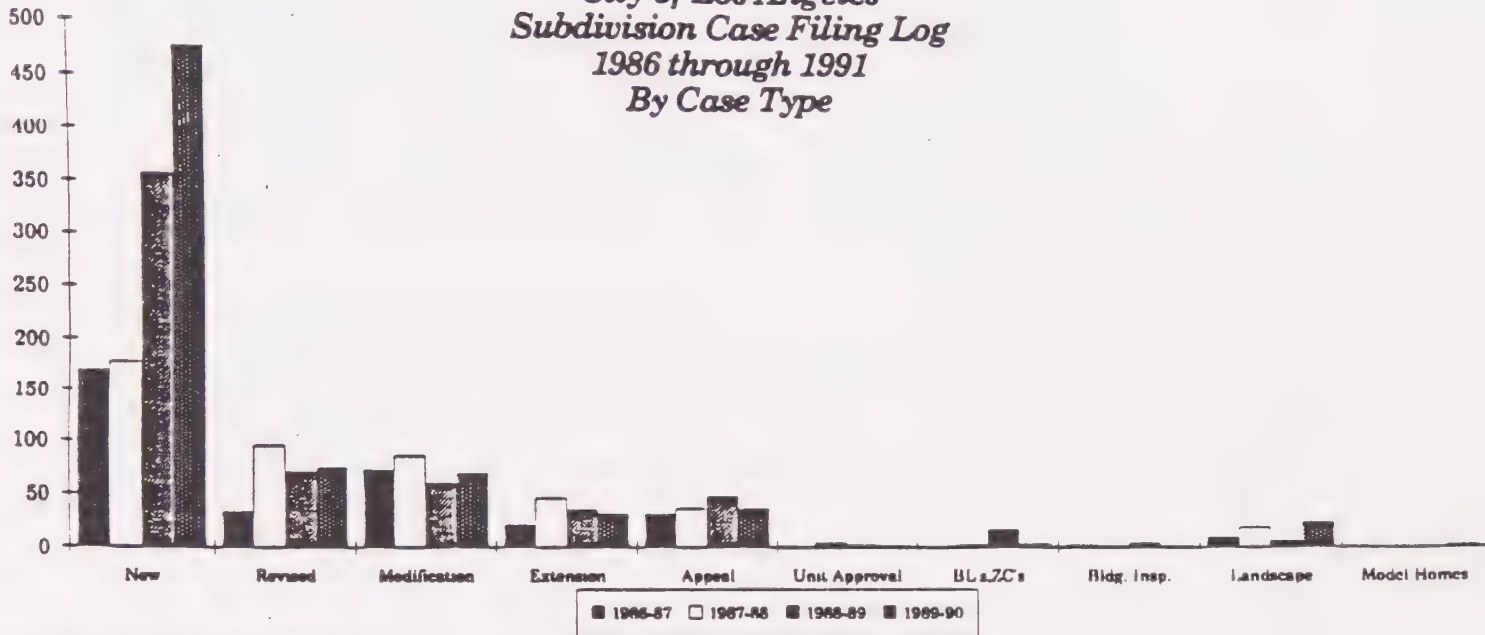
The Subdivision Section is responsible for processing 1) subdivision applications for the Division of land into five parcels or more and corrections thereto; 2) private street applications; and 3) Zone Changes and Coastal Development Permits and area variances associated with subdivision applications. The subdivision section has two research units and operates a counter located in Room 655. An additional research unit was recently added to address the increase and subsequent backlog in processing subdivision applications. As shown in Figure 17, the proportional case mix for this section has remained constant over the last several years. However, during the last two years, the Division has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of subdivision applications.

The Parcel Map Section is responsible for processing 1) parcel map applications for the division of land into four parcels or less and corrections related thereto; 2) Zone Changes and Coastal Development Permits incident to Parcel Maps; 3) Parcel Map exemptions; 4) Certificates of Compliance; and 5) Parcel Map violations. The section is currently divided into two work units including one unit responsible for research and case processing and one unit to staff and man the Parcel Map counter also located in Room 655. As shown in Figure 18, the proportional case mix for this section has remained constant over the last several years.

The Urban Design Section is a new unit that replaces the environment section, which was transferred to Plan Implementation. This section conducts a site plan review of each eligible project, which includes:

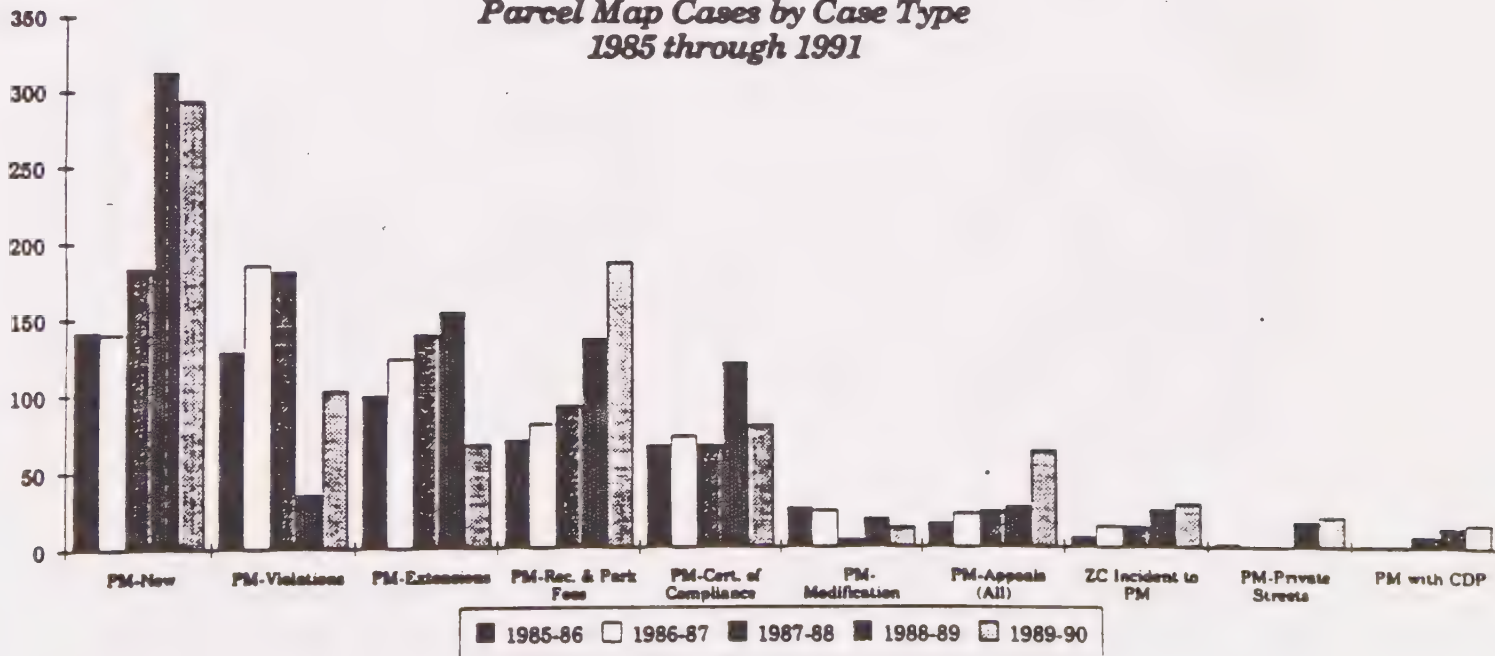
- Any development project which results in an increase of 40,000 gross square feet or more of non-residential floor area;
- Any change which results in a net increase of 500 or more average daily vehicle trips as determined by the Transportation Department; and

**Figure 17**  
**City of Los Angeles**  
**Subdivision Case Filing Log**  
**1986 through 1991**  
**By Case Type**



\*1991 only includes the first two months of the year.

**Figure 18**  
**City of Los Angeles**  
**Planning Department**  
**Parcel Map Cases by Case Type**  
**1985 through 1991**





- Any existing commercial or industrial development which results in an addition of 40,000 square feet or less of non-residential floor area to an existing development which does not meet certain requirements related to footprint, signage, height and parking.

The Urban Design section has three units: Site Plan Review, Design Review Board, and Landscape. This section also operates a separate counter in the rear of Room 655.

The Site Plan Review Unit resulted from the passage of the Site Plan Review Ordinance which became effective on October 13, 1990. The unit became operational in early November and was fully staffed in the latter part of December. Because of its newness, we did not analyze the operations of this unit. We do address the interface of Environmental Review and Site Plan functions in another section of our report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Topic: Parcel Maps and Subdivision Case Processing**

**Background:** The work activities for review and approval of both parcel and sub-division applications center around a case file that contains the applicant's application, supporting maps, and documentation and comments from City Planner, other City Departments, including Transportation, Engineering, Building and Safety, Fire, etc.. The Departments' comments, pertaining to the proposed project's compliance with existing rules and regulations and related conditions required to ensure its continued compliance. As shown in Table 25, our review noted it is currently taking the Division 178 days, or approximately 6 months, to process a sub-division application that does not require an Environmental Impact Report. This service level is better than that provided by the Department just one year ago (205 days), yet remains one month behind the approval time provided just two years ago (141 days) to process sub-division applications. It is important to note that the Department's current service level, while not complying with the State Map Act requirement of 50 days, compares quite favorably with subdivision case processing time found in other communities.

As shown in Table 26, it currently take 229 days or 8 months to process parcel map applications. The current service level for Parcel Maps is significantly below than that provided by the Department just one year ago (159 days) and the time required to process parcel maps (140 days) four years ago. Unlike subdivision, the Department's current service level is below the processing time for parcel map applications often found in other communities.

*Table 25*  
*City of Los Angeles Planning Department*  
*Project Time Analysis-Subdivision*

	<u>Elapsed Time- Submittal to Agenda*</u>	<u>Elapsed Time- Submittal - Engineering *</u>	<u>Elapsed Time- Submittal - Build. &amp; Safety *</u>	<u>Elapsed Time- Submittal - Env. Clearance *</u>	<u>Elapsed Time- Last Dept. to Agenda</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>
All	162	90	40	38	94	100%
1988	141	76	33	31	86	62%
1989	205	102	50	58	113	29%
1990	178	111	55	22	89	9%
<u>By Council Districts</u>						
5	138	60	32	31	86	19.62%
3	146	94	24	33	81	9.49%
8	146	111	7	na	35	0.32%
15	146	56	40	32	93	9.81%
4	147	81	50	32	74	5.06%
11	149	70	47	31	89	13.61%
7	162	111	26	46	84	8.23%
6	177	113	23	123	87	2.22%
1	183	110	64	77	86	3.48%
2	184	112	41	47	92	9.18%
13	186	105	47	35	110	7.91%
10	187	92	33	70	116	2.22%
12	189	124	35	30	158	6.01%
14	235	145	105	82	74	1.58%
9	355	560	125	35	172	1.27%

\* Average Time

*Table 26*  
*City of Los Angeles Planning Department*  
*Parcel Map Case Processing Analysis*

<u>Cases</u>	<u>FY 1986-87</u>	<u>FY 1987-88</u>	<u>FY 1988-89</u>	<u>FY 1989-90</u>
Number of Cases	149	155	209	311
Average Process Days	140	150	159	229
% Withdrawn or Other	4.7%	6.5%	9.6%	4.5%
% Approved	3.4%	23.9%	24.4%	7.8%
% Conditionally Approved	79.9%	62.0%	63.7%	81.7%
% Denied	12.1%	7.8%	2.4%	6.1%



The review and approval process for both Subdivision and Parcel Maps, as shown in Figures 19 and 20, follows essentially the same process with two noticeable exceptions: 1) the public hearing for parcel maps is conducted by a Senior City Planner versus an Associate Zoning Administrator for subdivision hearings; 2) appeals pertaining to parcel map determinations are heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals while subdivision appeals are heard by the Planning Commission.

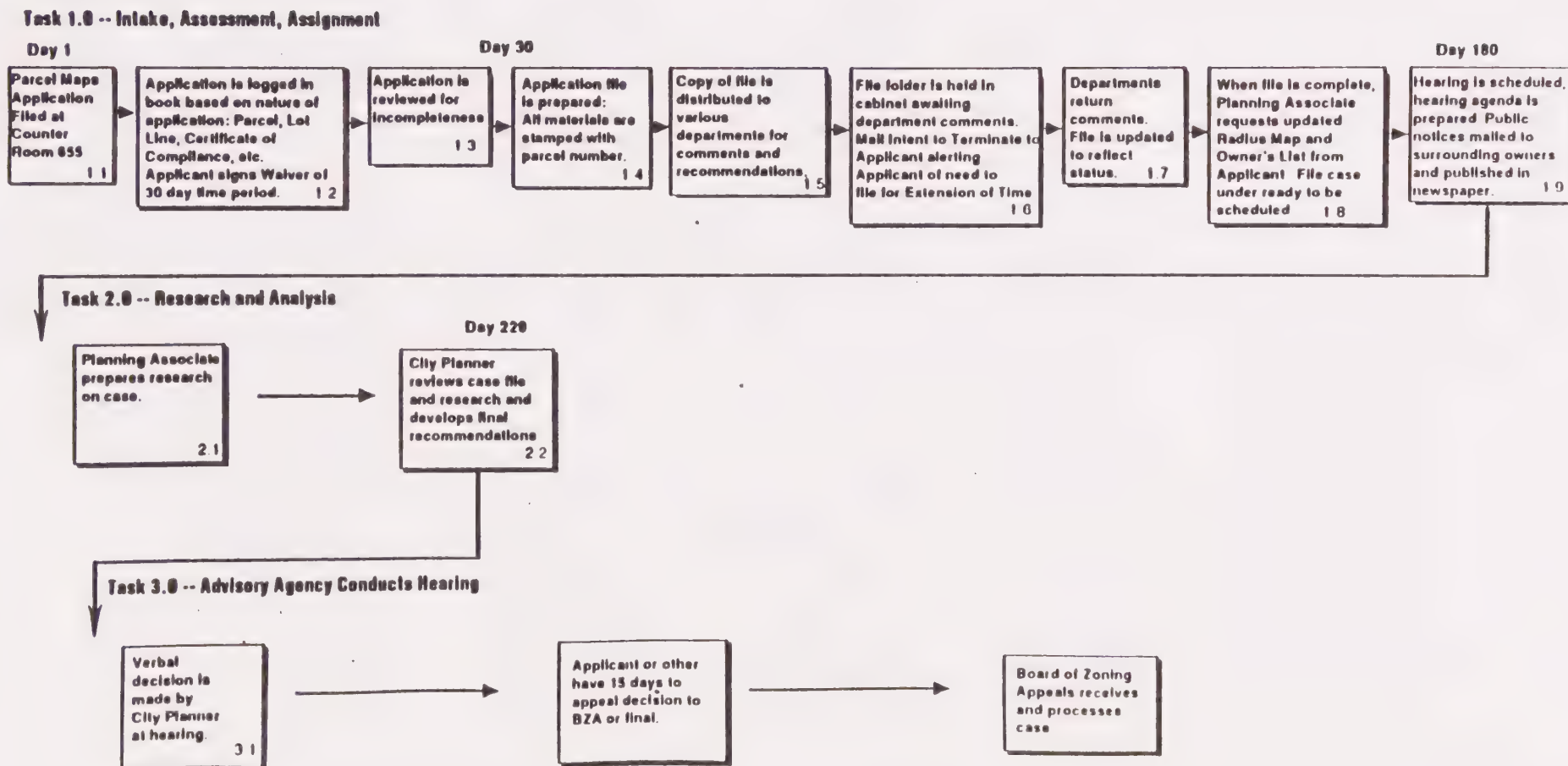
There are a number of factors that have contributed to the increasing delay in processing both subdivision and parcel maps applications, including 1) dramatic and consistent increase in the number of new applications without an attendant adjustment in staffing resources. This will be discussed further in the next topic; 2) a proliferation of regulatory provisions throughout the City, including Interim Control Ordinances, specific plans, special study areas, etc. that require staff's research and consideration in reviewing prior to approving submitted applications; 3) notification requirement being increased from 300 to 500 feet radius has more than doubled the number of notifications being mailed which has a corresponding workload requirement on both clerical and professional staff. The Department is currently in the process of contracting this function, which will relieve the staff of this added workload; 4) staffing and organizational issues in the Engineering Bureau, which is responsible for reviewing submitted plans regarding sewers, grading requirements and geology and soil testing have created significant time delays in processing applications. This issue will be discussed further later in this section; and 5) inefficient case management policies and procedures as discussed below.

At present, the case processing procedures for both sub-divisions and parcel maps are paper-rich, requiring multiple forms and duplications. While much of the need for forms and documentation cannot be avoided, many of the forms in use are unclear or cumbersome and in need of modification or redesign.

Our examination of the processing of a sub-division case revealed that case files change hands at least nine times, not including the distribution of file copies to various departments. Moreover, our analysis noted there are long periods when files sit inactive in a holding file cabinet waiting to be processed by a Clerk Typist, after intake waiting for assignment to a Planning Associate or Assistant for researching and when the case file is complete and sitting on a shelf awaiting a hearing date .

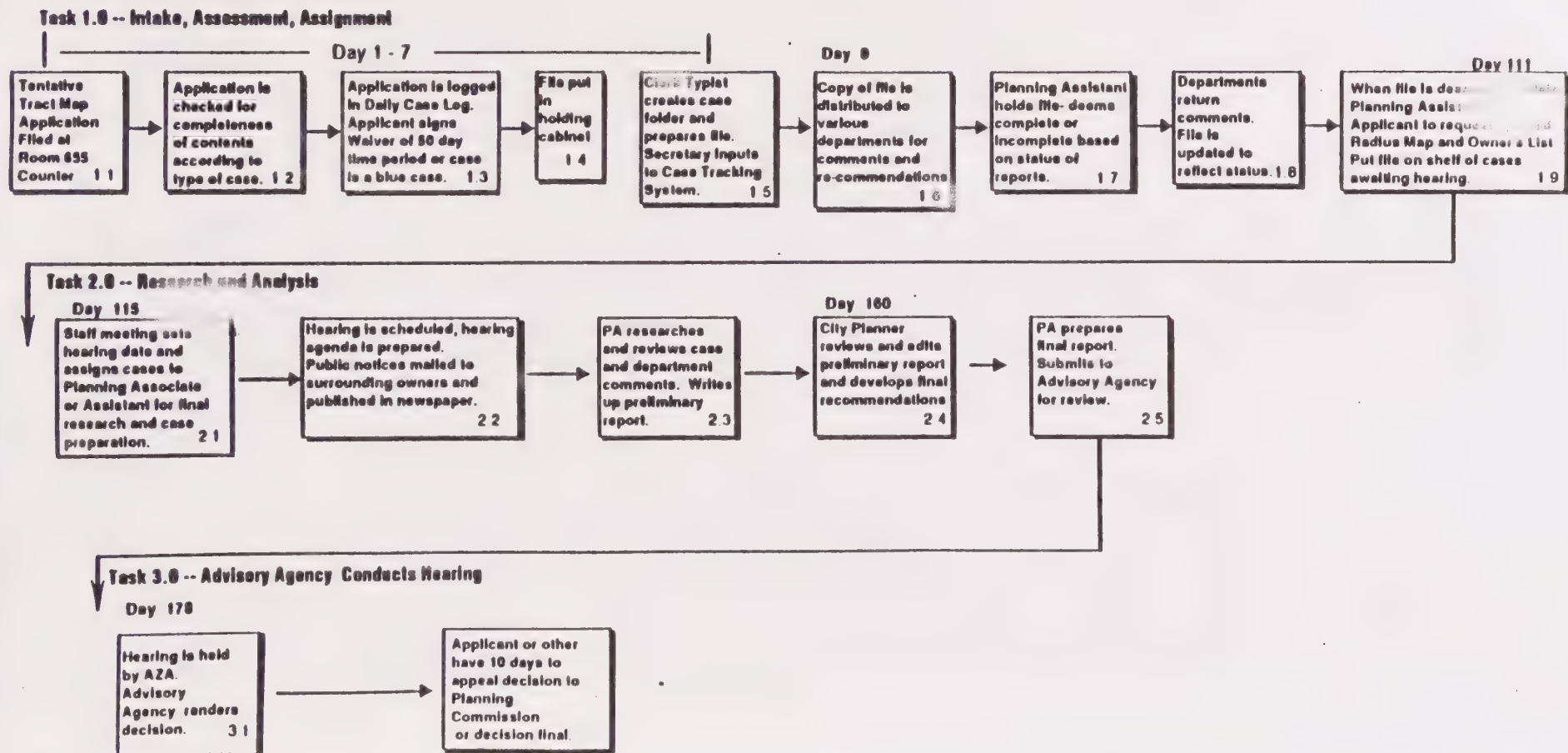
Our examination of the processing of a parcel map case revealed that there is an initial checking for completeness of application when the application is submitted over the counter, and then a second checking for completeness which requires 30 days to process. Included in this second checking is a more thorough review of the nature of the case and any hidden or unexpected elements that may require additional conditions to process. Once a file is deemed complete, the paperwork is initiated and the review process described above begins.

**Figure 19**  
**Division of Land - Parcel Maps - Current Case Processing**





**Figure 20**  
**Division of Land - Subdivision- Current Case Processing**



**136.** *Recommendation:* The Division of Land should establish a policy of 120 days as the goal for receiving and approving sub-divisions applications and 90 days for receiving and approving parcel maps. We recognize this recommended level of service is significantly higher than the current level of service provided by the City. However, this can be accomplished through revised case management policies and procedures; improved staff productivity; and improved turnaround time from the Bureau of Engineering, as discussed below.

**137.** *Recommendation:* The Division of Land should tighten its screening of applications at time of filing and under no circumstance should accept incomplete cases to be processed. Applicants should be encourage to utilize Community Planning Consultation services before they submit their application for either a sub-division or parcel map.

**138.** *Recommendation:* The Division, in conjunction with other city departments should also consider establishing a land development counseling team or a "One Stop Team". This service performed on an appointment basis and with a consultation fee could provide applicants or developers with many cost reducing and time saving suggestions regarding restrictions and pitfalls that they may encounter and , in turn, this should applications more simple to process upon submission.

**139.** *Recommendation:* The Division of Land Section should redesign and consolidate the multiple forms currently used in processing both sub-division and parcel map cases. Redesign of forms should focus on clarity, readability, and multi-functionality of forms. For example, application forms, regardless of specific case type, should include applicant information, sub-division or parcel map information, fee calculation and fee payment information.

**140.** *Recommendation:* The Division of Land Section should examine the feasibility of obtaining a simple software package, for use in conjunction with the case tracking systems, that would be used to provide for the automated labelling of forms that are required in the subsequent stages of processing a case. Currently, for both sub-division and parcel map cases, applicant and sub-division or parcel map information is manually written or stamped on all forms requiring a significant amount of Clerk Typist/ Secretary (Sub-divisions) or Planning Associate (Parcel Map) time. Once a case was accepted and logged on the case tracking system, the required forms would be automatically produced. A nominal cost of \$5,000 is estimated for this effort.



**141. Recommendation:** The processing of both parcel map and subdivision cases should be simplified to reduce the number of times that a case file changes hands or sits idle. First, a thorough review of applications and policy of accepting only completed applications will mean that most applications will pass the 30 day review process. Moreover, once an application is accepted, the application should be placed in the Clerk Typist/Secretary's in basket for immediate processing. This eliminates the second delay (often up to 10 days) during which the file is unprocessed. The application should then be input to the case tracking system directly from the application and the required forms generated with the information already provided (as discussed above). The Clerk Typist/ Secretary would then create a file folder with all forms included and distribute copies to the various departments. Furthermore, a due date of no more than 30 days (as discussed in a subsequent topic) should be included on the distribution forms to all departments receiving file copies for comments and recommendations.

The file should then be given to a Planning Assistant who monitors the status of the case regarding outstanding reports from other departments and any clearances that may be missing. Once the file is complete, the Planning Assistant would provide those files ready for hearing and assignment for research at the weekly Thursday meeting. The remaining process would not change from the existing process except that once a Planning Assistant or Associate submits the preliminary report to the City Planner, the City Planner should then provide any editing or comments and pass it on directly to the clerical staff. The exception to this rule would be if the preliminary report was deemed to need further work by the City Planner.

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#### **Topic: Parcel Map and Subdivision Staffing Levels**

**Background:** The Division of Land is involved in providing an array of services to a wide variety of constituents. Each of those services involves a series of activities that constitute work for staff, which in turn translates into workload. It appears the Division has typically relied upon the rule of "3" when assigning work and determining the staffing required for its various case processing functions. The basis for this standard appears to be historical rather than a formal quantitative assessment of level of effort required to successfully complete the task. It is clear, based on our analysis that the current yardstick used by managers to determine staffing needs and evaluate productivity are complete and ineffective management tools. This was confirmed in our on-site observations and noted in employee responses on surveys.

As previously discussed, the Division's proportional case mix relating to subdivision and parcel map activities has remained constant



during the last four years. However, the number of new tract applications has more than doubled during the last two years. This dramatic increase in applications was not accompanied simultaneously with an increase in staff, either in the sub-division section or in the other reviewing City departments. Thus, the number of cases on hand at the beginning of each month, which included all cases received to date that had not been completed, including the prior month's cases, has continued to rise and increased to a high of 153 in January 1991. Our review of staff utilization, as shown in Tables 27 and 28, indicate that each staff member assigned to the three subdivision processing units is handling approximately 5 cases a week. More important, our analysis indicates staff in these units are spending approximately 91% of their direct billable hours on direct case processing activities. This is a desirable level and supports the perception of their improved productivity (The Department's previous standard, which was historical, indicated 3 cases per staff member per week was sufficient). The fourth unit in subdivision has primary responsibility for manning the public counter, which is opened Monday-Friday 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM. The client contact and workload generated from this counter is discussed below. However, for purposes of our analysis, it is appropriate, given the additional responsibilities of the counter, that the fourth unit is processing a reduced number of cases (an average of 3 cases per staff member) a week.

Although the approval processes for tract and parcel are similar, the organization and staffing for these two case processing functions are physically and managerially separated. Parcel Map, under the direction of a Senior City Planner, is composed of two units. One unit (1 City Planner, 1 City Planning Associate, and 2 Assistants) performs the typical case processing related activities, including conducting the review, collecting and analyzing the other City Department comments, and attending hearings. Unlike sub-division, the staff in parcel map do not prepare a written report and distribute it to the applicant prior to holding the hearing. The second unit (1 City Planner, 1 Assistant and 1 Associate) provides staff services to the Parcel Map Counter and performs other more specialized duties, including processing parcel map exemptions and certificates of compliance. Unlike sub-division, any available staff member will wait on the public at the counter.

**142. Recommendation:** Based on the current number of new applications and staff's high level of productivity, the current backlog of subdivision cases will be eliminated by October 1991. At that time, the fourth subdivision unit should be available for reassignment to other functions, roughly a \$200,000 resource. The remaining nine staff members assigned to the three subdivision units of 3 City Planners, 3 Planning Assistants and 3 Planning Associates, should be sufficient to man the public counter and process current case load within the timeframe recommended above.



**Table 27**  
**City of Los Angeles City Planning Department**  
**Development and Design Division**  
**Time Use Analysis**

	Dev. & Design	Div. of Land	Subdiv. Unit 1	Subdiv. Unit 2	Subdiv. Unit 3	Subdiv. Unit 4	Parcel Map Unit 1	Parcel Map Unit 2	Site Plan Review	Urban Des. Unit	All
<i>Non Case</i>											
Administration/ Supervision	63.48%	21.69%	7.02%	2.23%	6.13%	2.88%	8.40%	2.58%	48.81%		11.98%
Clerical			3.00%	0.46%		6.31%	0.86%	4.22%			1.95%
Hearings		1.85%			2.76%		0.31%	0.16%			0.53%
Holiday	6.09%	4.92%	5.11%	4.93%	4.29%	4.98%	4.98%	5.00%	4.95%	5.00%	4.93%
Meeting		2.92%	1.28%	1.77%	0.23%	0.47%		0.55%	0.21%		0.79%
Other	3.48%	13.23%	1.08%	0.85%	4.60%	0.86%	2.33%	4.14%	7.33%	4.25%	3.60%
Public Information/ Contact	22.61%	1.69%	23.68%	0.54%	0.61%	1.48%	18.44%	9.69%	0.21%		8.18%
Shift Time-Time Owed		0.62%	1.02%	1.39%	1.22%	0.31%	0.39%	1.25%	0.83%		1.1%
Sick	0.87%		1.28%	1.23%		3.50%	0.78%	1.33%	4.44%		1.57%
Training	3.48%	1.38%	0.38%	1.08%		2.34%	0.39%	0.08%	2.48%		0.95%
Vacation		6.62%	9.96%	0.31%	3.07%	1.40%	1.09%	2.50%	5.16%		3.90%
Sub-Total (Non Case)	100.00%	54.92%	53.80%	14.79%	24.92%	24.53%	37.96%	31.48%	74.41%	27.19%	39.50%
<i>Case</i>											
BI			1.15%				0.31%				0.22%
BL			0.83%								0.13%
BZAA							0.23%				0.03%
CC		0.31%	4.59%	3.62%	1.15%	7.48%	0.51%	4.14%			2.96%
CCA					0.23%						0.03%
CDP			0.77%			0.16%	1.24%	2.97%			0.67%
COC							12.52%	6.64%			2.41%
COCA							2.18%				0.27%
COT				2.54%							0.32%
CT		1.38%		3.08%		0.55%					0.55%
CTA						0.70%					0.09%
IND								0.31%			0.04%
LP			8.23%					2.50%	0.52%	25.63%	2.43%
MF							7.66%	5.63%			1.67%
MODP		0.15%		0.69%			0.47%	0.86%			0.27%
MODT		2.46%				0.31%					0.40%
ODTA											0.01%
		6.15%	1.15%	44.61%	5.00%	43.07%	1.94%	4.92%			14.90%
PCA				0.31%	0.92%						0.16%
PM		1.85%	0.19%	0.15%			4.43%	7.27%			1.64%
PMA		0.62%					2.33%	1.56%			0.53%
PMEX		0.62%					1.40%	16.41%			2.28%
PMEXA							0.08%	0.55%			0.08%
PMOXT							0.27%				0.03%
PS		3.69%	0.89%	3.78%	0.31%	8.18%	1.56%	0.31%	1.14%		2.27%
PSA				0.92%							0.12%
Q			1.60%				0.08%	4.38%			0.80%
RP							0.62%				0.08%
SF		12.77%	4.08%	10.55%	2.07%	10.59%	20.22%	8.75%	2.99%		8.32%
SFA				0.69%				0.55%			0.16%
SM			2.49%								0.38%
SPR		2.77%						0.31%	13.31%	36.56%	2.01%
SPX									7.53%	10.63%	1.05%
TR					10.35%						1.33%
TT		7.38%	0.19%	9.78%	45.86%						7.62%
TTA		1.23%		0.08%	5.75%						0.82%
VAR		2.15%									0.14%
YV		1.54%	8.23%								1.36%
ZC				4.39%	2.53%	4.44%	3.97%	0.47%	0.10%		2.00%
ZCA											0.01%
Sub Total (Cases)	0.00%	45.08%	46.20%	85.21%	75.08%	75.47%	62.04%	68.52%	25.59%	72.81%	60.50%
Totals	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

**Table 28**  
**City of Los Angeles City Planning Department**  
**Development and Design Division**  
**Time Utilization Analysis**

Work Code	All Units		Division of Land		Subdivision-U1		Subdivision-U2		Subdivision-U3		Subdivision-U4		Parcel Map-U1		Parcel Map-U2		Site Plan Review Unit		Urban Design Unit	
	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases	Average Time Per Case	Number of Cases
DIR	3.87	6			4.60	4							2.00	2						
BL	3.25	4			3.25	4														
BZAA	1.60	2											1.60	2						
CC	6.07	48	2.00	1	6.00	12	6.71	7	3.75	4	6.73	11	0.93	7	6.83	6				
CCA	3.00	1							3.00	1										
CDP	4.63	15			12.00	1					2.00	1	3.20	6	4.75	6				
COC	1.77	139											1.45	111	3.04	28				
COCA	9.33	3											9.33	3						
COT	4.13	8					4.13	8												
CT	6.09	11	4.50	2			10.00	4			1.40	5								
CTA	4.50	2							4.50	2										
IND	2.00	2													2.00	2				
I.P.	11.27	22			16.13	8									8.00	4	5.00	1	9.11	9
MP	2.89	69											2.10	47	6.00	12				
MOUP	2.26	12	1.00	1			4.50	2					1.50	4	2.20	6				
MODT	2.73	16	8.33	3	1.91	11					4.00	1								
MODTA	1.00	1							1.00	1										
NC	7.13	213	10.00	4	13.00	14	6.66	87	3.62	21	9.70	67	1.00	25	12.60	6				
NCA	2.29	7					2.00	2	2.40	5										
PM	2.78	60	12.00	1	3.00	1	2.00	1					1.78	32	3.72	25				
PMA	2.84	19	4.00	1									2.60	12	3.33	6				
PMEX	3.63	64	4.00	1									1.29	14	4.29	49				
PMEXA	2.67	3											1.00	1	3.50	2				
PMXT	0.39	9											0.39	9						
PS	4.13	66	4.80	5	2.00	7	8.17	6	4.00	1	6.25	20	1.54	13	2.00	2	5.50	2		
PSA	4.00	3					4.00	3												
Q	6.20	10			6.25	4							0.50	2	14.00	4				
RP	0.73	11											0.73	11						
SF	3.35	263	3.07	27	4.92	13	3.61	38	13.50	2	8.50	16	2.06	126	4.00	28	9.67	3		
SFA	4.00	4					3.00	3							7.00	1				
SN	3.55	11			3.55	11														
SIM	7.66	35	10.00	1											4.00	1	5.16	25	14.61	8
SIX	3.34	32															2.81	26	5.67	6
TR	3.00	45							3.00	45										
TT	8.28	94	8.00	6	3.00	1	8.47	15	6.31	72										
TTA	6.00	14	2.67	3			1.00	1	7.50	10										
VAN	4.67	3	4.67	3																
VV	7.32	19	5.00	2	7.59	17														
ZC	4.43	46					14.25	4	8.25	4	11.20	5	1.70	30	3.00	2	1.00	1		
ZCA	1.00	1							1.00	1										
ALL	4.57	1362	4.80	61	6.70	108	6.11	181	5.90	106	8.11	119	1.75	456	4.62	190	4.28	58	10.11	21
RANGE	0.39	11.27	1.00	18.00	1.91	16.13	1.00	14.25	1.00	13.50	1.00	11.20	0.39	9.33	2.00	14.00	1.00	9.67	5.67	11.61
Average Cases Per Person Per Week	5.6		3.8		2.7		5.7		6.2		3.7		11.3		6.9		2.1		4.0	



**143.** *Recommendation:* The staff assigned to parcel map case processing activities should subscribe to the same standard of 90% of available time on case related activities as their colleagues in subdivision. Adherence to the standard should increase the section's case production 25% and enable the existing staff to work off the existing inventory of 74 cases within 12 weeks of implementation.

**144.** *Recommendation:* The Parcel Map hearings should be changed to an exceptional basis. The parcel map section should issue written reports to applicants and include the decision as part of the public notification process. Hearings would be held for only those applicants where either the applicants or concerned citizens want to challenge the published decision. The appeal process would continue to remain unchanged.

**145.** *Recommendation* The Division managers, in conjunction with the entire management staff from each unit should develop managerial estimates of the time required to perform the different tasks required by each type of case processed by the respective units. These activities and estimates should be published and used as an internal guide at the time of case intake and assignment. At the time of assignment, the superior should keep logs regarding the number of cases and estimated man hours currently being handled by each subordinate. The major focus of the superior should be on the estimated allocated man hours versus the actual hours spent by each employee on each case. The data should be captured on a weekly report and used by management to 1) assess staff performance of planned vs. actual; 2) plan for future staffing requirements and ability to manage workload and meet desired timeframes; and 3) evaluate the appropriateness of the current managerial estimate and yardstick and make the required adjustments if needed. The use of this type of system will require employees to keep daily records of their time and initially will be met with resistance. However, once fully implemented, the information captured and used correctly will significantly aid both the management and the employee in better assessing and equitably distributing the Department's fluctuating workload, documenting budget requests and achieving maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

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**Topic: Parcel Map and Subdivision Case Management**

**Background:** The research policies and procedures and case management activities relating to tract map and subdivision are similar. Currently, the management and supervisory responsibilities are split between the AZA, Deputy Advisory Agency and the Senior City Planner. Moreover, each of the six research units is headed by a City Planner who is

responsible for the supervision of 1 Planning Assistant and 1 Planning Associate. Staff is assigned cases for review and write-up once all the comments have been received from the other Departments -- Building & Safety, Engineering, etc.

**146.** *Recommendation:* The Parcel Map and Subdivision units should be consolidated and reorganized into a single section. This section, which would be focused on the processing of all cases, would be under the direction of the AZA, who would be responsible for managing the activities of three research units. Each research unit would be under the direction of a City Planner and consist of at least four planning assistant and associate staff members. The larger research unit would broaden the span of control for the City Planner position, which is the Department's first level of management. Moreover, the large and consolidated research unit provides greater flexibility in managing the Division's fluctuating case load and meeting the unique requirements of various cases. The consolidation and cross training of personnel could significantly enhance the utilization of the Division's limited staffing resources.

**147.** *Recommendation:* The City Planner position should assume greater supervisory responsibility for the staff development and training of personnel. This will require Planning Assistants and Associates to take responsibility for performing research and writing up reports and submitting them to the City Planner for review and approval. The City Planner should not be involved in the preparation and writing of staff reports on an on-going basis. The delegation of responsibility and expectation of satisfactory performance is realistic given the level of education, training and experience for both the Planning Assistant and Associate classifications.

**148.** *Recommendation:* Cases should be assigned to each staff member upon intake. It should be that individuals responsibility to track the status of the case in other Departments' review and to work with the client in receiving final approval.

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**Topic: Counter Operation and Services**

**Background:** The Division of Land is the only section of the Department that is not represented at the Fourth Floor Construction Service Counter. Instead, the Division maintains three separate counter areas for sub-divisions, parcel maps and site plans within Room 655. The sub-division section maintains a separate counter area in the rear of Room 655. The counter is open Monday - Friday, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM. One staff unit (1 City Planner, 1 Assistant and 1 Associate) is assigned to assist



customers on a first come, first served basis. Our analysis of the counter logs and confirmed by our on-site observations, indicates the sub-division counter is busy most of the time it is open, handling approximately 31 people each day. Typically, clients are waiting an average of 25 minutes and staff are spending twelve minutes to review their materials and answer questions. The counter space is limited and cannot accommodate more than 2 people at any one point in time and only 1 if a set of plans is open. When staff members are not working at the counter, they are performing case management related activities.

Parcel Map maintains its own counter located at the entrance of Room 655. The parcel map counter, like the two other separate counter areas in Room 655 is small and inadequate. It is open 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday - Friday. The public is served on a first come first served basis by available parcel map staff. Our analysis indicates approximately 23 people a day are coming to the counter and staff is spending less than 15 minutes answering questions and/or discussing their cases. Unlike the public counter at sub-division, our analysis indicates that the parcel map counter is busy 5 of the 6 hours it is open and the waiting period is less than 10 minutes. Moreover, our on-site observation noted a significant number of public counter contact was for informational purposes regarding parcel maps and the approval process.

**149. Recommendation:** The various public counter area in Room #655 should be physically consolidated and moved to the front of Room 655. The current location of the sub-division counter is disruptive to the on-going case work of the employees and presents security risks to the Department by having clients adjacent to open file areas and employee work stations. In addition, the segmentation and location of the three counters - parcel, sub-division and site plan - result in duplication and inefficient use of the office's limited work space.

**150. Recommendation:** The Division has placed a high priority on providing timely and quality customer services to its clients and constituents. This is a laudable objective and one we wish the Division to maintain and expand upon. In that regard, we are recommending the Division establish a consolidated counter, as discussed above, and assign staff on a full time basis to man the counter operation. The staff would be assigned on a rotational basis and should be trained to answer questions and provide assistance to walk-in customers on matters relating to parcel maps, subdivisions and site plans. The Senior City Planner position currently overseeing parcel maps would be assigned supervisory responsibility for the consolidated counter. Clients who have cases that have been assigned and are currently in process would be seen on an appointment basis as recommended above, by the staff members assigned to

the Division. The use of a reservation system coupled with a consolidated counter should enhance customer service, and at the same time significantly reduce the pedestrian traffic and accompanying noise level in the office.

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**Topic: Subdivision - Hearing Officer**

**Background:** Associate Zoning Administrator, in addition to serving as the hearing officer at weekly meetings and Deputy Advisory Agency, currently manages the work of the four (three person) sub-division staff units. Our analysis indicates the AZA is currently hearing an average of 11 cases each week. This is significantly below the average of 18 that existed two years ago. The Hearing Officer position was upgraded from a Sr. City Planner to an Associate Zoning Administrator position several years ago. The stated purpose of the reclassification was to strengthen the management and technical capabilities of the Division on issues pertaining to division of land and enable the Division to simultaneously process zone variance requests with cases incidental to Parcel Maps and/or subdivisions. Our analysis of the current hearings indicate very few have variance or conditional use requests incidental to the sub-division application. The Associate Zoning Administrator should by classification and compensation spend a majority of the time reviewing cases and making determination. Moreover, based on the current number of applications being filed and the increased productivity of subdivision staff, the AZA will have to more than double the current number of cases being heard each week if the Division is to meet to four month review cycle recommended above.

**151. Recommendation:** The AZA should establish a yardstick of 30 case hearings conducted each week. To meet the standard, the AZA will be required to hold hearings twice a week and spend at least two other days working with staff to review cases and/or finalize determinations. The remaining day in each week would be spend addressing other matters pertaining to the division. The Senior City Planner currently assigned to Parcel Map should assume the many of the administrative duties currently being performed by the AZA and provide back-up for the AZA.

**152. Recommendation:** The AZA should review the comments submitted by the other Departments and seek clarification prior to the hearing and implement where possible a consent calendar format as part of the agenda. The use of a consent calendar will eliminate attendance of subdivision hearings on non-controversial items.

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**Topic:    Role and Interface with Bureau of Engineering for Subdivision and Parcel Map Review**

**Background:** The Bureau of Engineering receives referrals of all land development cases from the Department of City Planning. These are applications that are processed through the City Planning Commission, the Zoning Administrator's Office, and the Subdivision Section. These applications are then distributed by the Land Development and Mapping Division of the Bureau of Engineering to the responsible engineering district offices, the Geotechnical Section of the Bureau of Engineering and Caltrans, if applicable. The Bureau of Engineering has district offices in the downtown area (Central District Office), in the Van Nuys area (Valley District Office), in the West Los Angeles area (West Los Angeles District Office) and in the San Pedro area (Harbor District Office).

Based upon recommendations from these offices, formal reports are written to the Department of City Planning outlining the requirements of the Bureau of Engineering pertaining to street dedications and improvements, sewer facilities, storm drain facilities and grading adjacent to public and private streets. In the majority of the cases, these requirements are then included as conditions of approval for the granting of a planning action.

For all subdivision maps (tract or parcel maps), once the tentative approval is given by the Department of City Planning, the Bureau of Engineering then becomes the responsible agency in doing the mathematical check of the final map. Once all the conditions have been satisfied, the final map is processed through the City Council for its approval and through the County Recorder for recordation.

Whenever public works improvements are required as conditions of approvals for any planning action, construction plans prepared by private engineering must be processed through the Bureau of Engineering for the City Engineer's signatures. A B-permit with applicable fees for plan checking and construction inspection must first be obtained, together with the necessary liability insurance and bond to guarantee the completion of the improvements. Once the plans are signed by the City Engineer, construction of the improvements can then proceed.

The Engineering Bureau has a total of 8 positions allocated Bureau-wide to review subdivision tract and parcel map applications. All of the position are general fund supported and subject to the constraint of those available monies. This level of staffing has remained constant over the last ten years, despite the significant increase in workload that has accompanied the increase in number of land division applications. Moreover, the eight position are allocated on a geographic basis with two staff members assigned full time to the Valley branch office, which oversee all applications in the Valley area. Our review noted that the applications

for work performed in the Valley currently account for 46% of the total applications on file with the Division. Thus 25% of the Bureau of Engineering staff allocated to assist land division is responsible for processing 46% of the workload.

The impact of this imbalance was confirmed in our review of the time sequence in the review process. As shown in Table 25, our analysis of processing times indicates the turnaround time for Engineering approval of tract maps has increased 46% during the last two years. More important, the delay is greatest in those areas served by the Bureau's Valley office.

**153.** *Recommendation:* The Bureau of Engineering should re-examine its current staffing allocation based on geographical location of workload. Although not included in the scope of our study, it appears the staffing allocation for engineering should be revised to better match the workload. Geographic distribution is an appropriate measure provided there is a corresponding flexibility in staffing resources to meet those unique requirements. Based on our analysis, it appears significant opportunities exist to enhance the equity of the Bureau of Engineering's allocation of its limited resources. A reallocation of existing, albeit insufficient, staffing, should reduce the time delay currently in the Valley office. However, based on the Bureau's analysis, the reallocation of existing resources will not by itself provide the additional man hours required to attain a 39-day processing standard, which is an essential element in meeting the 120 day processing goal recommended above.

The Board of Engineering should add staff resources required to meet the 30-day processing time objective. The Bureau has requested six additional positions (5 Civil Engineers Assistant IIIs and one Clerk Typist) to eliminate the current backlog and maintain a desirable turnaround time for review of subdivision applications. As previously discussed, we are unable within the scope of this study to assess the appropriateness of the Bureau's request. However, regardless of the number of additional staff, it is important that any additional staffing be supported and tied to user fees and charges raised by applicants. This policy will provide both the flexibility and accountability for these important interdepartmental support services.

**154.** *Recommendation:* The staffing provided by the Bureau of Engineering to review division of land applications should be covered by user fees and charges imposed on the applicants. The revenue received from these fees and charges should enable the Bureau to have greater flexibility in increasing staff to meet changing workload and maintain timely review.



**155.** *Recommendation:* The Bureau of Engineering should establish a standard for processing cases. The Bureau has worked out an estimated man-hour requirement for each of the types of applications processed for review. Based on these estimates, the Bureau is able to estimate the current workload on hand and estimate workload of those awaiting review. These estimates are essential to the Bureau in determining the current adequacy of staffing levels and ability to meet desired turnaround time. This is a standard that had been previously achievable provided adequate staffing is maintained by changes in workload.

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**Topic:** Senior Planner Role and Responsibility

*Background:* The reorganization and consolidation of the Division's case management function will have a direct impact on the AZA and Senior City Planner positions. As recommended above, the AZA will focus almost entirely on case management duties including conducting hearings twice a week and working with the research staff the other three days in dealing with issues related thereto. Given the change in the role and responsibility of the AZA, the question remains what is the most efficient and effective use of the Senior City Planner position, which previously spent 50% of the time on parcel map case management issues.

**156.** *Recommendation:* As recommended above, the Senior City Planner position would assume day-to-day management of the Urban Design Section. Currently, the Urban Design section is without a supervisor and thus the functions associated with that desired program remain fragmented between various divisions within the Department. Despite the Department's policy statement regarding increased focus on urban design, the Department's programs in that regard are not moving forward. The Senior City Planner should assume leadership responsibility for and provide direct supervision to the site plan unit, the design review board unit reassigned from Neighborhoods unit, and Landscape. In addition to these supervisory duties, the Senior Planner would continue to provide back-up assistance to the AZA in conducting and maintaining the timely hearing of subdivision cases.

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**Topic:** Administration, Organization and Support Services

*Background:* Room 655 houses the three sections - parcel map, subdivision and site plan that make up the Division of Land. The Division's operating environment can only be described as intense -- people walking in and out, people asking questions, people being waited upon and/or waiting to be seen, people crowding around desks, unanswered telephones ringing.

and large files being passed back and forth, files stacked on desk and counter tops, numerous file cabinets, many in a state of disarray, and people passing files back and forth. All of this interaction takes place in a congested, inefficient and dysfunctional work space. The Division of Land office environment would fail the Department's own environmental review. Organizationally and administratively, Room #655 is a disaster.

**157.** *Recommendation:* Room #655 should be remodelled to provide for more open space. A single public counter should be constructed in a horseshoe at the entrance to Room 655. Our analysis indicates Room 655 has 6,667 square feet of floor space. This is more than adequate to accommodate a public counter space. All staff desks would be behind the counter area and screened from public encroachment. The remaining staff work stations would be designed to accommodate the current staff and their operating requirements. There is sufficient square footage to provide for a conference room and office space for the Division head and two supervisors.

**158.** *Recommendation:* The clerical staff would be reorganized to serve as the central clerical pool for the Division. The clerical pool would be responsible for processing all staff and case reports, answering telephones, serving as receptionists and scheduling clients conferences. The clerical pool would be under the direction of a supervisor who would report to the Senior City Planner as discussed above.

**159.** *Recommendation:* The professional staff would perform all direct text processing on case work. This would require all staff to have data terminals that are networked with one another and the clerical pool.

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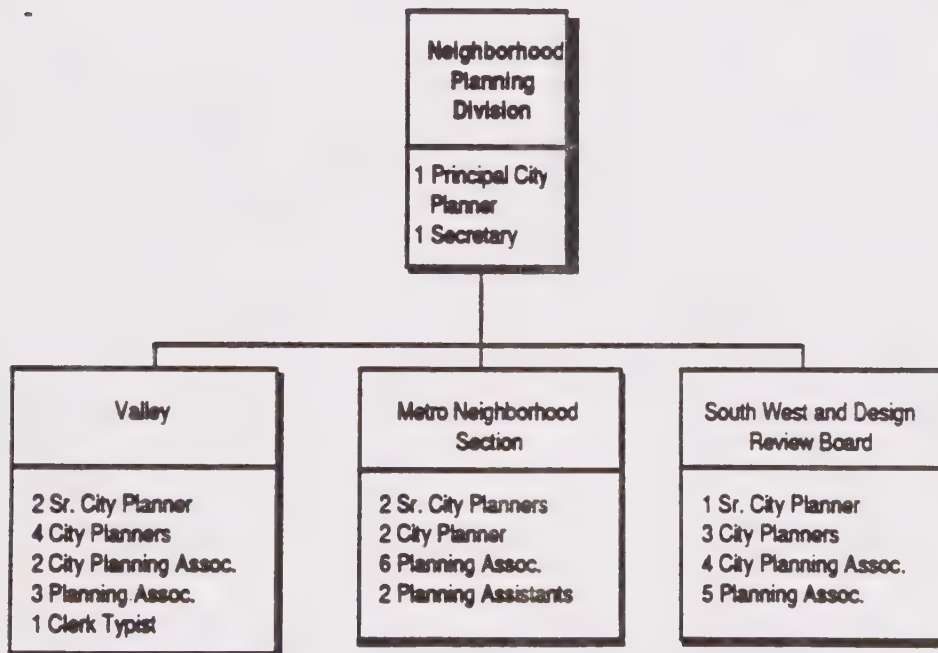
## VII. NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DIVISION

### OVERVIEW

This division is intended to plan and oversee the orderly development of the City's geographically defined neighborhoods that together comprise the greater City of Los Angeles. In this regard, the neighborhood planning division is responsible for the: processing of all specific plans, plan amendments, zone changes, Interim Central Ordinances (ICO); making case comments on public works (alley vacations, sale of public lands, school acquisitions), tract and parcel map applications; processing hardship exemptions; coordinating with Community Redevelopment Agency attending joint committee and staff meetings; overseeing Historic Preservation Overlay Districts; completing A.B. 1283 ordinance implementing Open Space and Public Facilities ordinances; and providing staff support to the Design Review Board.

The division, whose main office is located at the Planning Department's offices at 3rd and Figueroa, is divided into three geographic sections as shown below.

*Figure 21  
Organization*



Each of these three geographic sections is further broken down into smaller units that oversee the specific neighborhoods and activities related thereto. The staffing for the department has remained constant during the last two years after a sizeable increase in staffing in 1989.

*Table 29*  
*Staffing Levels*

	<u>FY</u> <u>90-91</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>89-90</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>88-89</u>
Principal City Planner	1	1	1
Senior City Planner	3	3	1
City Planner	8	8	1
City Planning Associate	14	14	7
Planning Assistant	10	10	6
Secretary	1	1	1
Senior/Clerk Typist	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
	<u>43</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>20</u>

As discussed above, the Neighborhood division is responsible for essentially two major work functions: case processing and related activities involved in issuing project permits, hardship exemptions, plan amendments, zone changes and ICO's. This workload may be described in terms of case processing including the number, time frame, process and actual planning. Our analysis of the number of cases processed and the turnaround time for reviewing cases for compliance and approval indicates that the Division's turnaround time for review has declined during the last three years in each of the three sections and is approximately 14 days from date cases are received and distributed. The second major function is planning work for this division, which is typically initiated by the City Council and/or executive order directive in response to an existing problem and/or condition. The Department will prepare in response to this directive a work program that may include a study, specific plan, zone change, plan amendment or any combination thereof.

**Specific plans** go through a rather involved process including the formation of a Citizen Advisory Committee; the collecting of data and analysis; the preparation of a preliminary plan and conduct of a public hearing; review by the General Plan Advisory Board; the revision of the proposed plan to reflect public comments and desires; the submittal of the proposed plan for Planning Commission review and approve; review and approval by the City Attorney's office; and finally to the City Council for adoption and approval of Mayor's office for implementation. The development of specific plans assuming a negative declaration regarding environmental impact is estimated to take 18 months to 24 months to complete.

**Interim Control Ordinances** are enacted by the City Council to regulate development in an area during the time the department is working on permanent regulations for an area. ICO's may be short, uncomplicated and easy to enforce; or lengthy, complex and difficult to enforce since they may require provisions that will be incorporated into permanent plans for the area. It is estimated that 93 days are required to develop and implement an ICO and get it to the Planning Commission for



review with an additional 15 days estimated on approval by the City Council.

**Project permits** are designed to provide for discretionary review of a project by the Planning Department. These may include ministerial regulations that B & S usually enforces but are also enforced by the Planning Department through project permit (height, parking, set backs, etc.). Neighborhood division staff is responsible for preparing the staff report for approval and disapproval of the project permit. The fees associated with the applicants are set forth in the governing ordinance (ICO). Appeals are filed with the Commission and assigned for determination by the hearing examiner and recommendation to the Planning Commission for adoption.

**Hardship exemption** permits an applicant to request a deviation from the regulations of a particular ordinance. The hardship review process is more expeditious and less costly than seeking a zoning variance. Neighborhood division staff are responsible for preparing staff reports and presenting it to the City Council for approval or denial.

**Environmental Review** - Staff in this division are responsible for evaluation of projects to determine whether CEQA is applicable or not for projects handled in this division. If an initial assessment is made that CEQA is applicable, a staff request is prepared and sent to the Environmental Review Committee for determination and action. If an EIR is required, an additional 18 to 24 months can be added to the specific plan time frame as discussed above.

**Plan amendments and zoning changes** in ICO areas are heard by the hearing examiner in the Plan Implementation Division.

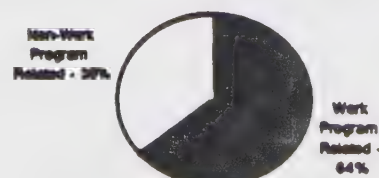
As shown in Figure 22 below, our analysis of the staff time spent on planning related projects indicates that during the last two years the majority of staff time is spent on work program related activities. As discussed above, an approved work program is any specific plan, plan amendment and ICO authorized and approved by Council. Case comments and counter service is not included in the Division's approved work program.

**Figure 22**

**1989-90 Work Programs**



**1990-91 Work Programs**



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Topic: Role of Neighborhood Planning

**Background:** The Neighborhood Planning Division is intended to plan and oversee the orderly development of the City's immediate geographically defined neighborhoods. In theory, the Neighborhood Planning Division should be guided in their work with individual neighborhoods and specific areas by one of the 35 community plans which are developed by the Citywide Division and which, in turn, are coordinated to fit the overall scheme for development in the City of Los Angeles as provided for in the City's General Plan. The status and age of the individual community plans and the City's General Plan are discussed at length in the Citywide Division section. Many community plans and parts of the General Plan are outdated and some have not been revised for up to 21 years.

Without up-to-date community plans or a current General Plan, development within the City of Los Angeles has historically been piecemeal-applied with varying degrees of coordination or success throughout the City. This lack of overall planning has substantially changed the role of the Neighborhood Planning Division from one of coordinating orderly development of the City's neighborhoods. The results have been threefold: the Neighborhood Planning Division's work is increasingly seen a "stop gap" measures to prevent development of a variety of kinds within specific neighborhoods; the Division's resources were, until recently, allocated to areas according to their relative levels of development and corresponding real estate values within the City (subsequent topic); and, the planning work for the Division, initiated in City Council, resulted in the allocation of the Division's resources dependent upon the political clout of the constituents of certain council districts (subsequent topic) rather than perceived need as defined by the planning professionals.

The Neighborhood Planning Division is responsible for administering Interim Control Ordinances and Building Moratoriums as measures to regulate development of a variety of kinds within specific neighborhoods during the time which the Division is working on permanent regulations for the area. When undesirable development occurs, neighborhoods have petitioned their councilperson to implement the adoption of an interim control ordinance or moratorium and, further, to initiate a site plan study. The net effect is that ICO's or moratoriums will halt development in the short run, and then a specific plan or an environmental review can be used to halt all development for at least two to three years if not more while the plan or study is completed. As evidence of this trend we can look to the more than 100 special land use restrictions, primarily ICO's and moratoriums, which apply to areas within the City of Los Angeles and that are or have been in effect over the past five years.



Neighborhoods which are able to organize and voice opposition to plans to locate certain facilities in their neighborhoods have learned to use the means at their disposal, namely ICO's and specific plans, to discourage undesirable development in their areas. The problem with this situation is that this is a reactive approach to planning. Instead of a coordinated plan whereby the Citywide and Neighborhood Planning Divisions oversee orderly development, including the use of specific plans to encourage development and revitalization of neighborhoods, specific plans are used and demanded by the neighborhoods to stop development of a perceived "undesirable" nature. As cited in the section on the Citywide Division, the inevitable result of this approach is that the City will attempt to change plans and relocate certain development to other areas. Without effective community plans and a General Plan, this will happen repeatedly and eventually all "undesirable" facilities will be located in a few communities.

**160.** *Recommendation:* The action agenda should be developed to set forth the Department's and the Neighborhood Planning Division's priorities in terms of pro-active planning. The agenda would establish target areas for development and revitalization. Specific plans would then be developed upon approval to achieve orderly development of neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles. In the short term, this will not immediately prevent the use of ICO's, moratoriums, specific plans, or EIRs as "stop gap" measures to prevent development. However, in the long term, a pro-active approach to planning will put specific plans in place to encourage orderly development.

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**Topic: Specific Plans/ICO's**

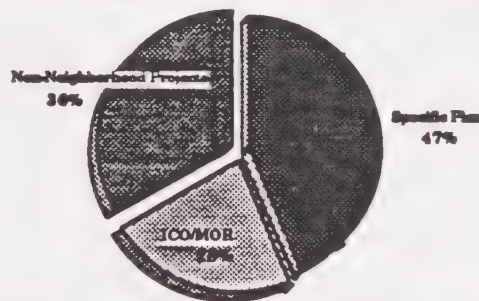
As summarized in Table 30 below, active specific plans and ICOs are pervasive throughout the City. Moreover, the number of specific plans currently requested but unassigned due to lack of staffing resources is continuing to increase. Our analysis indicates the average specific plan was 634 days old in terms of elapsed time since staff time was assigned to develop the plan and plan was completed. An additional 300 days should be added from the time Council moves to initiate the planning effort and Plan adoption. Some specific plans take even longer.

**Table 30**  
**Current Work Activities**

	Specific Plan			ICO/MOR			Non-Neighborhood Projects		
	Active	Deferre	Unassigned	Active	Deferre	Unassigned	Active	Deferre	Unassigne
North Valley	4	3	1	-	2	-	2	1	--
South Valley	5	-	2	-	5	-	7	-	--
Metro									
Central	3	-	-	1	1	-	1	3	-
North East	5	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	--
Metro	4	2	-	-	8	-	10	2	--
West	5	3	1	-	4	-	4	-	-
South	3	2	2	-	3	-	6	-	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>	

As shown in Figure 23 below, 47% of the Division's staff hours are spent on specific plans, with 25% on ICOs. The Division is encountering significant delay in the timely review of the plan by the City Attorney's Office. Our review noted there are specific plans submitted to the City Attorney's Office for review one year ago that to date have not been reviewed.

**Figure 23**  
**Work Program Man Hour Allocation**



**161 Recommendation:** The Division should establish 12 months as a target for completing the staff work on a Specific Plan. Plans that take a longer time period lose the momentum and focus for the effort.

**162 Recommendation:** The City should use a more uniform format for ICOs in order to reduce the cost and confusion in implementation.

**163 Recommendation:** Given the high cost of completing Specific Plans, the City should explore other options to achieve similar results such as overlay zones or code amendments.



## Topic    Priorities and Allocation of Staffing Resources

**Background:** The lack of overall planning in the City of Los Angeles has substantially changed the role of the Neighborhood Planning Division from one of coordinating orderly development of the City's neighborhoods to a measure of last resort to stop undesired development. One result of this had been that the Division's resources were being allocated unevenly to address projects or problems as they arose throughout the City. Community plan areas which were the sites of development activity were also those communities and neighborhoods where one would find greater activity on the part of residents and land owners to control or regulate development through the use of interim control ordinances, moratoriums, and pursuant specific plans and environmental reviews. This is especially true for areas in which we find mixed commercial and residential land use, the best examples of which include the community plan areas of Wilshire, Hollywood, and Westwood.

One way to measure the allocation of the Division's resources would be to examine where the majority of staff efforts have been focused geographically. Table 31 on the following page illustrates the volume of activity over the past five years with regard to special land use requirements by community plan area. There is a direct relationship between the greater the number of special land use requirements in a community plan area and the greater amount of the Neighborhood Planning Division's resources devoted to processing and administering those requirements. As we will note from Table 31, there is also a direct correlation between the level of activity in terms of special land use requirements and the level of development and real estate values in a given community planning area. Areas of high level development activity were, in essence, absorbing a disproportionate amount of the Neighborhood Planning Division's time and resources. Of further interest is the notable fact that in community plan areas which are economically depressed and so more socially isolated, very little activity was taking place in terms of special land use requirements as illustrated by the low number of requirements in areas such as Northeast Los Angeles and South Central Los Angeles.

A second result of the changed role of the Neighborhood Planning Division resulted in what may appear to be a discriminatory allocation of the Division's resources dependent upon the political clout of the constituents of certain council districts. Planning work for the Neighborhood Planning Division is initiated by City Council actions. Typically, a neighborhood group or association will petition their Councilperson to initiate an ordinance to stop planned development of a certain activity. As discussed above, this typically leads to a specific plan and or other measures which serve to closely regulate or control development.

*Table 31*  
*City of Los Angeles Planning Department*  
*Community Plan Areas*  
*Restrictions in Addition to Plan*

Planning Area	Number of Special Land Use Restrictions	Years Since Latest Revision
Wilshire	17	15
Hollywood	8	4
Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake	8	17
Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills	6	7
Westwood	6	4
Westlake	5	17
Chatsworth-Porter Ranch	5	17
Encino-Tarzana	5	15
West Los Angeles	5	17
Brentwood-Pacific Palisades	5	14
West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Park	4	11
Silverlake-Echo Park	4	7
Central City North	4	12
Northridge	4	16
Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey	4	15
Westchester-Playa Del Rey	4	17
Bel Air-Beverly Crest	4	14
Northeast Los Angeles	3	12
South Central Los Angeles	3	12
Central City	3	17
North Hollywood	3	16
Granada Hills-Knollwood	3	17
Southeast Los Angeles	2	11
Arleta-Pacoima	2	15
Mission Hills-Panorama City-Sepulveda	2	5
Reseda-West Van Nuys	2	6
Sunland-Tujunga-Lakeview Terrace	2	11
Venice	2	21
San Pedro	2	11
Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks	1	14
Sun Valley	1	14
Sylmar	1	17
Wilmington-Harbor City	1	1
Harbor-Gateway	1	12
Boyle Heights	0	12



Areas of greater economic prosperity typically are better organized to swiftly take action such as described above to block unwanted development through applying political pressure to their councilperson. Table 32 illustrates the Neighborhood Planning Division's Work Program examined by council district for all programs. The greater the number of work programs in a council district area translates into a greater amount of the Neighborhood Planning Division's time and resources devoted to processing and administering those programs. As we will note from Table 32, there is a direct correlation between the level of activity in terms of work programs and the relative level of economic prosperity in a given council district area. Areas of economic prosperity are, in essence, absorbing a disproportionate amount of the Neighborhood Planning Division's time and resources. Of further interest is the notable fact that in council district areas which are economically depressed and/or include many low income residents, very little activity is going on in terms of work programs as illustrated by the low number of programs in typically minority and low income council districts such as Districts 7, 8, and 14.

The Department and Neighborhood Planning Division recently addressed these problems by implementing a new method of allocating staff resources. According to the new process, staff resources are now unilaterally distributed on an equal basis by seven geographic areas.

This new method of allocating resources is a good start, however, an equitable distribution of staff resources between community plan areas will still present two problems. The first is that certain areas which had commanded disproportionate resources from the Neighborhood Planning Division in the past may perceive the new method of resource allocation as a result in a decline in the level of service for their area. This in fact may be the case. The second problem facing the Division's new method for resource allocation is that in reality need for planning services may be greater in one district versus another.

**164. Recommendation:** The Planning Department should continue to develop allocation systems for neighborhood planning activities based on need as well as some equitable distribution of activities throughout 35 community planning areas and 15 council districts. Special attention should be given to economically depressed areas.

In economically depressed regions, the lack of special land use requirements or work programs would seem to indicate a low priority for the development and revitalization of those areas and could be construed as socio-economically discriminatory. Investors and developers might be encouraged to undertake activity in economically depressed regions if incentive specific plans were in place and community plans were current.

**Table 32**  
**City of Los Angeles Planning Department**  
**Work Programs by Council Districts**  
**Neighborhood Programs**

Council District	Active Work Programs	% of All Active Work Programs	Unassigned Work Programs	% of All Unassigned Programs	Deferred Work Programs	% of All Deferred Programs	Non-Neigh. Work Programs	% of All Non-Neigh. Programs	Number of Applicable ICO/MOR's	% of All Applicable ICO/MOR's
1	7	12.1%	0	0.0%	1	5.6%	2	6.1%	3	7.3%
2	6	10.3%	0	0.0%	1	5.6%	1	3.0%	4	9.8%
3	3	5.2%	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	7.3%
4	5	8.6%	0	0.0%	2	11.1%	6	18.2%	5	12.2%
5	5	8.6%	2	20.0%	4	22.2%	8	24.2%	6	14.6%
6	5	8.6%	1	10.0%	3	16.7%	2	6.1%	3	7.3%
7	1	1.7%	1	10.0%	1	5.6%	1	3.0%	1	2.4%
8	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.4%
9	3	5.2%	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	2	6.1%	0	0.0%
10	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	1	5.6%	0	0.0%	4	9.8%
11	4	6.9%	1	10.0%	4	22.2%	2	6.1%	1	2.4%
12	6	10.3%	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.0%	2	4.9%
13	4	6.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	21.2%	3	7.3%
14	1	1.7%	1	10.0%	1	5.6%	0	0.0%	3	7.3%
15	6	10.3%	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.0%	2	4.9%

\* Information taken from Neighborhood Planning Division 1990-91 Work Program



**Topic: Design Review**

**Background:** The Design Review Boards were recently created as a result of specific plans. To date, the City has three Boards that require staff time have limited authority for projects in the West Los Angeles area of the City. The Design Boards are made up of seven members each appointed by City Council to review design issues. The members are usually professionals or specifically design professionals. However, there is no clear criteria for membership on the Board. While staff has been assigned to assist the Boards, there is significant confusion and concern regarding the role and responsibility of the Design Boards. This confusion includes both their external authority and the Department's internal role and responsibility and organization for Design review. The Board receives planning cases from other divisions within the Planning Department and is requested to review the case and provide comment and recommendations relating to the particular design issues of the case. Questions exist regarding the scope of their authority. Moreover, organizationally, The Design Review Boards are assigned to Neighborhoods Division while the Site Plan Review and the Urban Design units are assigned to the Design and Development Division and appear to have overlapping areas of responsibility.

**165. Recommendation:** The Planning Department, in conjunction with the Neighborhood Planning Division, should develop specific functional and structural guidelines with respect to the Design Review Boards and get Council adoption of said guidelines.

The composition of the Board should be outlined including clear criteria for membership. The relationship of Board members to staff within the Neighborhood Planning Department should be clear as to the availability of staff resources to the Board. The process for design review should be established with clear guidelines as to input and recommendations regarding specific cases.

**166. Recommendation:** The Planning Department should review the function of the Design Review Board in relation to the functions of the Site Plan Review and Urban Design units with the Design and Development Division.

The relationship between the Board and the two units should be examined to explore the possibility of uniting the functions under one coordinated unit. This is particularly important to avoid repetition of functions between the two divisions. Consolidation of function could also result in a more efficient approach to processing planning cases. This issue needs to be addressed in the immediate future as the caseload for Design Review Boards and the Site Plan are increasing.

**167.** *Recommendation:* As an alternative to Design Review Boards, consideration should be given to placing the design review function with staff. This would be consistent with the decision process being used for other development activity.

**168.** *Recommendation:* Most cities the size of Los Angeles have a much more comprehensive design function and staff within the Planning Department. A full review of the staffing and design functions should be completed.



## VIII. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION DIVISION

### OVERVIEW

The mission of the Plan Implementation Division is:

- To interpret and to implement the land use policies, zoning ordinances, and the State and City environmental guidelines as required for the timely processing and administration of applications submitted to the Planning Commission for determination and to insure subsequent compliance with the conditions of approval.

This Division also completes staff research projects as requested by the Planning Commission. Additionally, the Division will complete the environmental clearance for cases which are submitted to other determining bodies (i.e., the Advisory Agency who decides upon subdivisions).

Prior to Fiscal Year 1989-90, this Division was known as Land Use. Shown below, in Figure 24, is the organization chart with four sections and 46 positions.

*Figure 24  
Organization Chart as of March 1, 1991*

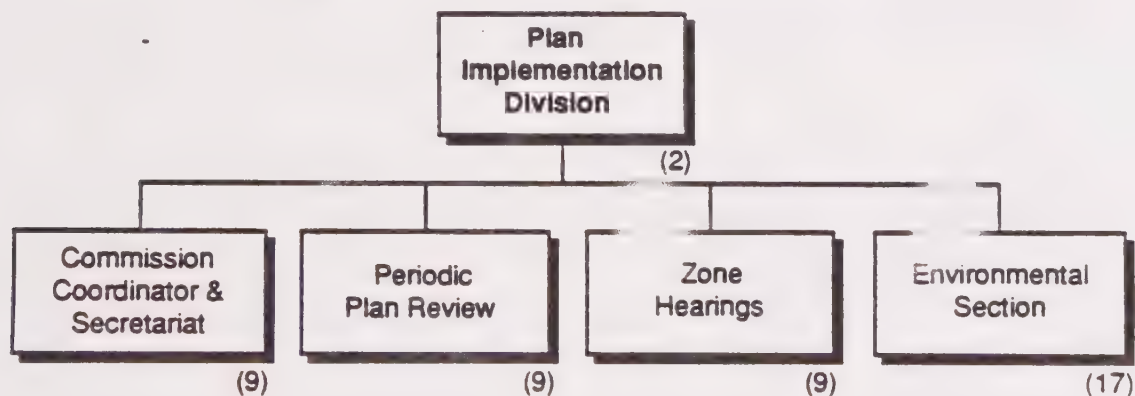


Table 33 below details the staffing, by classification, of the Division. It is authorized for 46 positions.

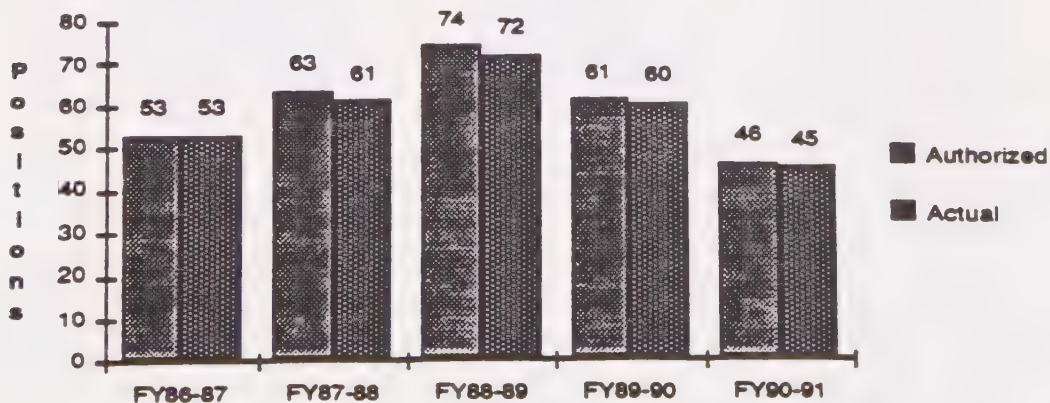
**Table 33**  
**Staffing by Classification**

	FY86-87		FY87-88		FY88-89		FY89-90		FY90-91	
	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual	Auth	Actual
Principal City Planner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior City Planner	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2
Assoc. Zoning Administrator	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
City Planner	11	11	13	13	21	20	14	14	12	12
City Planning Associate	11	11	14	12	15	14	19	18	15	14
Planning Assistant	8	8	7	7	7	6	10	10	3	3
Commission Exec. Assistant II	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Commission Exec. Assistant I	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Secretary	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Clerk Typist	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Clerk Typist	5	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	4	4
Clerk Stenographer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Subtotal	48	48	52	50	63	61	61	60	46	45
Cartographer	4	4	8	8	8	8				
Senior Cartographer	1	1	2	2	2	2				
Principal Cartographer			1	1	1	1				
Total	53	53	63	61	74	72	61	60	46	45

In Fiscal Year 1989-90, the cartographers were reassigned to the Systems & Mapping Division. For the current year, the reduction in staffing is reflective of the transfer of positions to the newly created Development and Design Division.

Figure 25 below charts the staffing of the Division for the last five years (cartographers not included).

**Figure 25**  
**Staffing Levels**





The authorized staffing levels have fluctuated during the past five years. The authorized staffing moved from 55 in Fiscal Year 1986-87 to a peak of 63, a 14.5% increase, in Fiscal Year 1988-89. In the current fiscal year, thirteen planning positions and one clerical position were transferred to a new division, Development and Design.

The formal organization differs only slightly from the informal organization. The differences in reporting relationships for several of the clerical positions do not represent a material alteration in the organization chart shown above in Figure 24.

Each of the four sections which comprise this Division are described beginning below.

#### **Commission Coordinator and Secretariat**

The workload of this function is comprised of:

- Providing administrative support for the receipt of applications, determining completeness and scheduling hearings.
- Drafting Council motions and Commission requests that initiate applications and subsequently, coordinating the processing of these applications.
- Performing research and staff work at the direction of the Council and/or Commission.
- Providing general office support to the Planning Commission.

All the following case types are processed by Plan Implementation. Regardless of where or how these cases are initiated, all are processed through counter 460S which then sends them through administrative functions.

Building Line  
Conditional Use  
Conditional Use - Plan Approval  
Design Review Appeal  
Density Bonus  
General Plan Amendment  
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone  
Interim Control Ordinance  
Plan Amendment  
Plan Consistency Appeal  
Project Permit  
Project Plan Appeal  
Project Permit and CDP  
Transfer of Development Rights  
Zone Boundary Adjustment  
Zone Change  
Zone Change and Plan Amendment

Once received, this section provides administrative support for applications which will be presented to the Planning Commission for determination. The typical administrative process is for a city planner in this section to organize the documents and then to review them for the purpose of determining if the applications are complete. If incomplete, the application is returned to counter 460S which will place them in a holding file, contact the applicant, and, subsequently, return the application to this section with the needed documents.

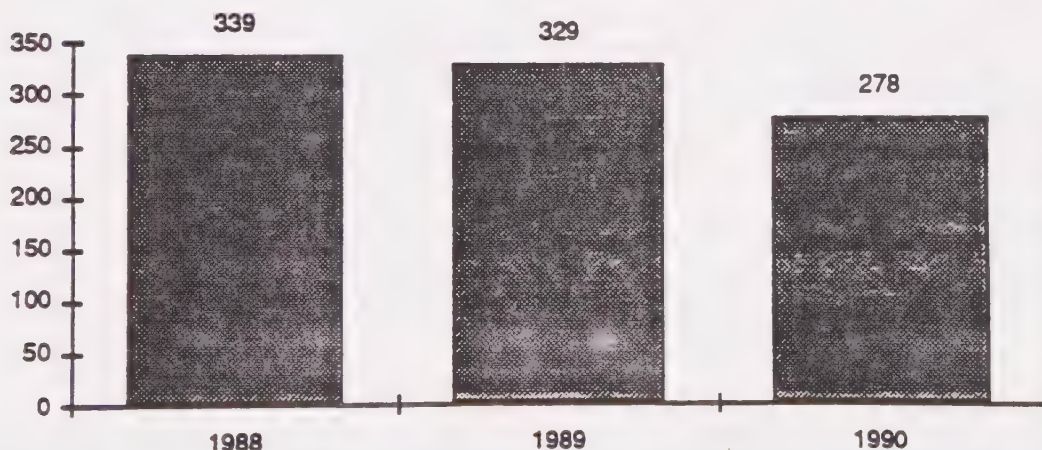
If complete, key events are scheduled so that legislative deadlines, if applicable, are met. These key events are:

- Hearing dates
- Report to Chief Examiner; and
- Report filed with the Commission Office. During the hearing process and report preparation, this section provides administrative support.

This section also drafts City Council motions and City Planning Commission requests for studies and projects and then responds to these requests.

The case workload for the Commission Office was developed by adding together the hearings scheduled for Zone Hearings and Periodic Plan Review's volume. Figure 26 shows the historical volumes.

**Figure 26**  
**Case Workload**



The case workload for this section is down slightly from prior years.

Once a case is considered complete, 75 days are allowed for initial processing and submittal to the Planning Commission. This 75 day timeframe may be only a portion of the total processing time. With regards to cases requesting a zoning change that will also require a change to the



General Plan change (Batching), the 75 days pertains to the time that the case is in the control of Plan Implementation. This begins with the receipt by the senior city planner and ends when submitted to the Planning Commission. Substantial processing which requires many months is performed before and after Plan Implementation's processes. For Batching, the case would have already been in-house for five months. Processing may take another four months after the Planning Commission makes its initial findings. The total processing cycle can take nearly a year. Extensions to the 75 days allowed for Plan Implementation can result from:

- The applicant requesting more time for submittal of required data.
- The Commission Office requesting an extension from the applicant.
- The Planning Commission requesting the case be continued to the next hearing.

No statistics are kept on the extensions nor the originating source of the request. The staff estimated that four or five cases are extended per month and almost all requests for extension come from the Planning Commission. Most of these requests are made and granted verbally. Few extensions are requested by the staff. This would seem to indicate that the 75 day schedule allowed for Plan Implementation is being consistently met.

The case volume is one component of the section's workload. The other components of drafting motions, performing research and analysis, and providing general administrative support are not as easily quantifiable and volume information has not been maintained.

### **Periodic Plan Review**

This section is also commonly referred to as the Batching Section. This section processes applications where the private developer needs approval of both a zone change and a plan amendment before his project can proceed.

The City has been divided into four geographic areas:

North Valley  
South Valley  
West Los Angeles  
Central

Applications requiring both a zone change and plan amendment can be filed twice a year for each area. These applications are processed together, or as a "batch"; therein the source of the common name for this section.

The entire batching process is described below. A time limit of 75 days is allotted for steps 5-11.

### Step

1. Prepares environmental initial study
2. Receives clearance on initial study (usually a mitigated negative declaration)
3. Prepares and mails hearing notice
4. Performs field check
5. Preparation of Initiation Report and City Planning Commission (CPC) initiation of plan amendments
6. Preparation and distribution to the General Plan Advisory Board (GPAB)
7. Preparation of Pre-Report to Hearing Officer
8. Conducts public hearing
9. Presents finding to General Plan Advisory Board (GPAB)
10. Prepares report for CPC
11. Presents report to CPC and CPC makes decision
12. Mails determination letter and appeal letter (appeals must be filed within 21 days)
13. Preparation of transmittal package to Mayor and City Council including Mayor's review/signature on the plan amendment
14. Scheduling of Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) committee meeting
15. Mailing of Notice of PLUM meeting to interested parties
16. PLUM conducts a public hearing and makes a decision
17. Preparation of transmittal package to City Council
18. City Council meeting and decision
19. Mayor's review and signature on the zone change
20. Publication of zone change ordinance
21. Approved plan amendment and published zone change sent by the City Clerk to room 505 for filing

Applications that are determined to require significant environmental study and/or an EIR are dropped from the processing after step 1. The applicant may resubmit the case, if the environmental study is complete, in the following time windows schedule for the related geographic area.

The volume of applications processed by Batching are shown below. The volumes are only those processed and does not include those dropped after step 1.

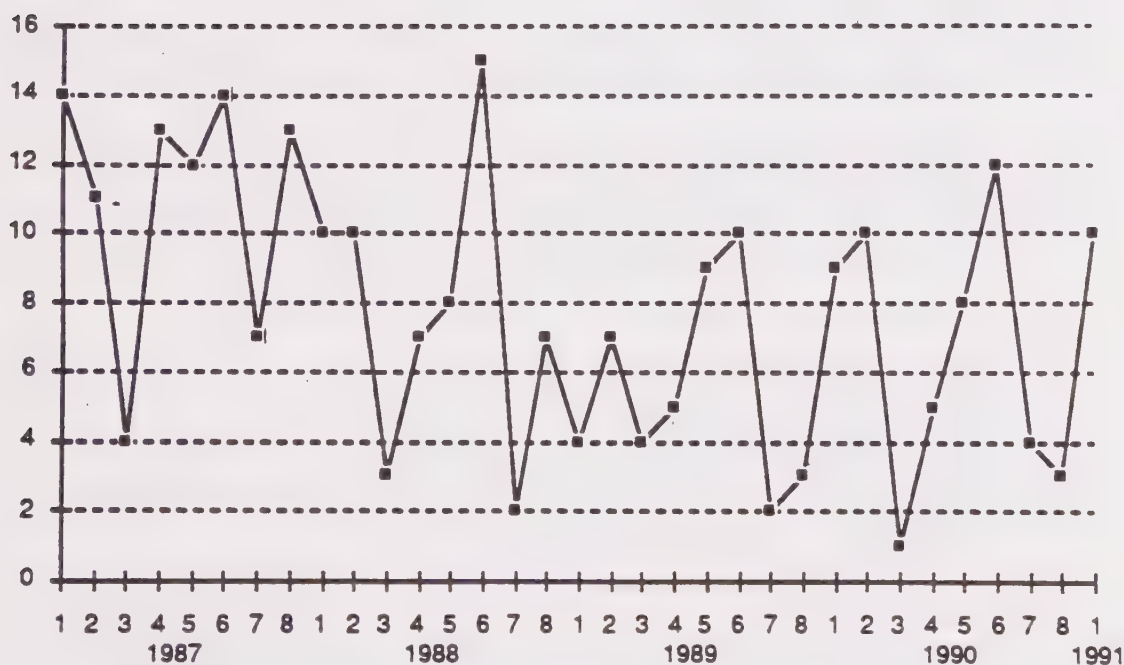


**Table 34**  
**Volume of Applications**

Time Window	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
1	14	10	4	9	10
2	11	10	7	10	
3	4	3	4	1	
4	13	7	5	5	
5	12	8	9	8	
6	14	15	10	12	
7	7	2	2	4	
8	13	7	3	3	
Totals	<u>88</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>52</u>	

These volumes have been charted in Figure 27 below:

**Figure 27**  
**Volume of Applications**



The annual volume decreased from 88 in 1987 to 44 in 1989. The 1990 volume increased to 52. The most active area is North Valley. South Valley and Central are moderately active. West Los Angeles is the least active.

This section is reporting no backlog. Batches are being processed within the 75 day timeframe for the steps relating to Plan Implementation.

Recent budgetary considerations resulted in combining this section with the Zone Hearings section and eliminating Periodic Plan Review's head position, a Senior City Planner by classification.

### **Zone Hearings Section**

This section receives all the applications submitted to the Commission's Office except those that require a zone change and a General Plan amendment (these go to Periodic Plan Review, a.k.a. Batching).

This section performs the following steps in processing an application:

#### **Step**

1. Obtains environmental clearance from Environmental Review Section
2. Performs field check
3. Prepares and mails hearing notice
4. Conducts public hearing
5. Prepares staff report including recommendations
6. Presents report to the CPC and CPC decides
7. Prepares transmittal package to the Commission Office
8. Prepares the Pre-PLUM package
9. PLUM meets and decides
10. Prepares the transmittal package to the City Clerk
11. City Council meets and decides
12. Mayor's review and signature on zone change is secured
13. City Clerk publishes zone change ordinance
14. Published ordinance and CPC file sent by City Clerk to Room 500 for filing

This section is unique in that the decisions of the hearing examiner are not modified before being presented to the CPC. The Chief Hearing Officer, an Associate Zoning Administrator by classification, may write a dissenting opinion, or a minority report, but he does not change the hearing examiner's recommendations.

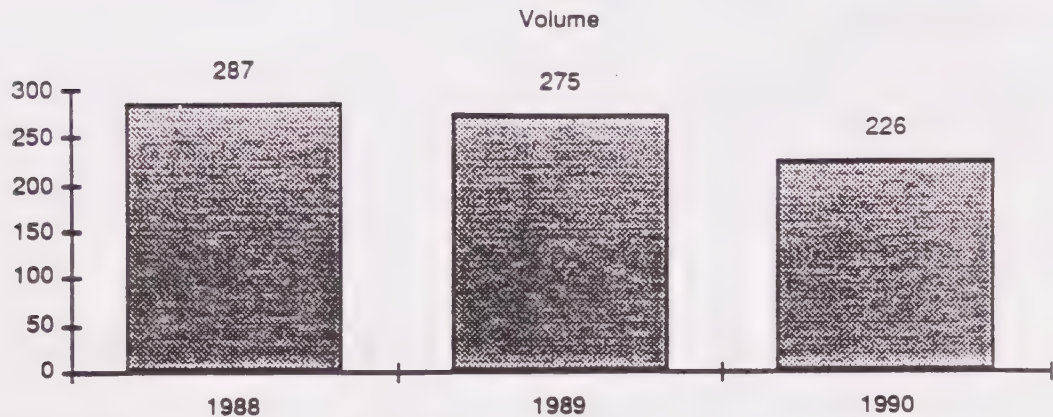
This section is intended to relieve the workload of the Planning Commission. Normally, the Planning Commission does not take much public testimony when these applications and the corresponding staff reports are presented. This process has been used for about 30 years.

The CPC will make the initial determination regarding a case. Appeals are decided by the City Council.

The Hearing Examiner's case load for the last three years is charted below.



**Figure 28**  
**Hearing Examiner's Case Load**



Currently, there is no backlog. All cases in this section are in some stage of processing. The cases are consistently processed within the mandatory deadlines.

NOTE: While being interviewed, the supervisor mentioned that this section may help the Development and Design Division with their backlog.

In terms of individual workload, there are many differences regarding complexity and case type. However, the supervisor believed that the following weekly processing rates, on the average, seemed realistic.

<u>Workload (cases per week)</u>	<u>Weekly Case Processing Evaluation</u>
2	Light case load
3	Medium case load
4	High case load (maybe too much)

On the average the staff is available 1,760 hours per year. This allows for the average time away from work per year. This translates into 44 useful weeks per year (1,760 divided by 40 hours per week). Using the case load evaluations above, annual projections were made.

<u>Weekly Case Workload</u>	<u>Useful Weeks</u>	<u>Annual Production Per Examiner</u>	<u>Number of Staff</u>	<u>Projected Annual Production for entire section</u>
2	44	88	4	354
3	44	132	4	528
4	44	176	4	704

Comparing the volumes being reported during the last three years with the projected annual production for the entire section, even the light case load exceeds the current volumes. Not having a backlog and consistently meeting processing deadlines would be expected in this

situation. Having the staff help other areas reduce their backlogs would be an effective use of the apparent staff availability.

The second function is the plan approval process. The volumes reported on a quarterly bases for eight time periods is shown in Table 35.

*Table 35*  
*Plan Approval Process*  
*Volume of Cases*

Beginning Date	Ending Date	Quarterly Volume	Annual Volume
-----	-----	-----	-----
12/18/88	3/11/89	124	
3/12/89	6/30/89	397	
7/1/89	9/23/89	263	
9/24/89	12/16/89	285	1,069 (1989)
12/17/89	3/10/90	280	
3/11/90	6/30/90	260	
7/1/90	9/30/90	275	
10/1/90	12/31/90	221	1,036 (1990)

The annual volumes are similar; however, the current volume seems to be down when compared to the previous six quarters. There are no reported backlogs.

### **Environmental**

The purpose of this section is to prepare the environmental clearances for private development projects.

The section is divided into three groups. One group performs the intake function; prepares the initial study, and, presents the initial study to the Environmental Staff Advisory Committee (ESAC). This committee recommends either a negative declaration or an environmental impact report (EIR). The ESAC's recommendations are advisory and not binding.

A negative declaration means that there are no significant environmental consequences and that no further study is required. The intake function prepares the negative declarations and returns the applications to the originating processing unit.

If an EIR is required, the other two groups within the Environmental Section manage the liaison with the applicant and ultimately, the independent review of the EIR which is prepared by private specialists retained by the applicant. They also elicit public response to the EIR and prepare a final report which is responsive to the questions raised during



the public response. Work is allocated within these two groups depending upon the size, complexity and location of the development project as well as existing internal workload.

Other sections, such as Periodic Plan Review or Site Plan (part of another division) may author the initial study. Regardless of the source of the initial study, they are submitted to the intake function for presentation to the ESAC. Subsequent processing is conducted by the Environmental Section.

This section has historically had a backlog and its lengthy processing cycle has been a departmental concern. As recently as July, 1990, Kenneth Topping, Director of Planning, submitted a staff report to the Planning Commission documenting the causes of processing problems and a task plan to address the problems.

Evaluating the quantities of cases and EIR's that exist is difficult. There are two reasons for this; the basis for counts has changed given organizational changes, and the basis for determining if a case is active or inactive (i.e. the applicant electing not to proceed) has also changed. Therefore, data can be studied for relative quantities; however, absolute precision may be arguable. The following are volumes reported by the division for the last four fiscal years:

**Table 36**  
**Environmental Review Volumes**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Exemptions</u>	<u>Negative Declarations</u>	<u>EIR's</u>	<u>Total</u>
86/87	1,384	842	28	2254
87/88	1,458	849	35	2342
88/89	1,296	840	48	2184
89/90	1,554	1,130	35	2719

### **Division Revenue and Expenses**

The revenue and budgeted expenses for this Division for the last five years are summarized in Table 37 below:

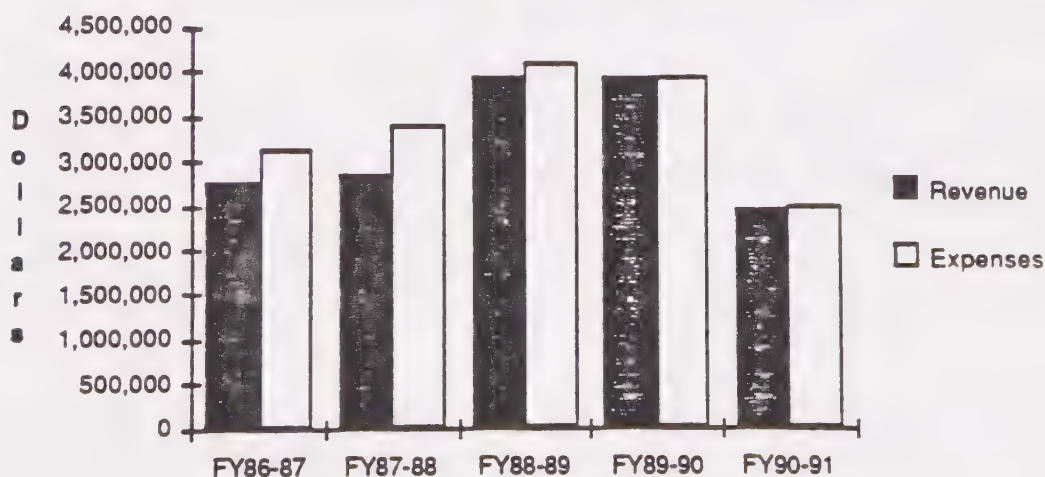
**Table 37**  
**Revenue and Expense Summary for Plan Implementation Division**

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>FY86-87</u>	<u>FY87-88</u>	<u>FY88-89</u>	<u>FY89-90</u>	<u>FY90-91</u>
Zone Change	\$929,673	\$692,853	\$600,384	\$551,764	\$669,262
Subdivisions	642,549	691,670	1,030,179	1,472,772	
Lot Splits	236,319	325,004	525,602	479,716	
Conditional Use - CPC	103,412	167,865	114,881	99,075	267,221
Plan Approval Fee	103,100	151,743	191,101	197,155	288,215
Environ. Report Filing Fee	710,042	768,376	914,982	1,047,764	1,169,114
Other	40,221	46,814	36,188	110,049	68,546
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,765,314</b>	<b>\$2,844,515</b>	<b>\$3,938,919</b>	<b>\$3,958,295</b>	<b>\$2,462,358</b>

Budgeted Expenses	FY86-87	FY87-88	FY88-89	FY89-90	FY90-91
Salaries					
Salaries, General	2,186,756	2,374,064	2,814,085	2,604,623	1,644,572
Overtime	18,465	18,465	13,094	40,000	21,000
Subtotal Salaries	2,205,221	2,392,529	2,827,179	2,644,623	1,665,572
Expense					
Printing and Binding	0	0	10,289	24,378	29,037
Travel	0	0	0	0	0
Construction Materials	0	0	0	0	0
Contractual Services	25,603	21,671	59,210	89,816	94,493
Transportation Expense	175	300	300	300	300
Governmental Meetings	0	0	200	200	100
Office/Administrative	12,780	13,403	32,023	30,099	19,804
Operating Supplies	6,943	14,526	39,298	18,368	18,405
Subtotal Expense	45,501	49,900	141,320	163,161	162,139
Equipment					
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Total Appropriation	2,250,722	2,442,429	2,968,499	2,807,784	1,827,711

To analyze full cost recovery, Figure 29 compares the revenue to the expenses. The budget for salaries shown above does not include fringe benefits. A fringe benefit rate of 40% was added to the salary expense before comparing total expenses to revenue. In Figure 29, expenses always exceed revenue.

**Figure 29**  
*Revenue versus Expenses including Fringe Benefits*

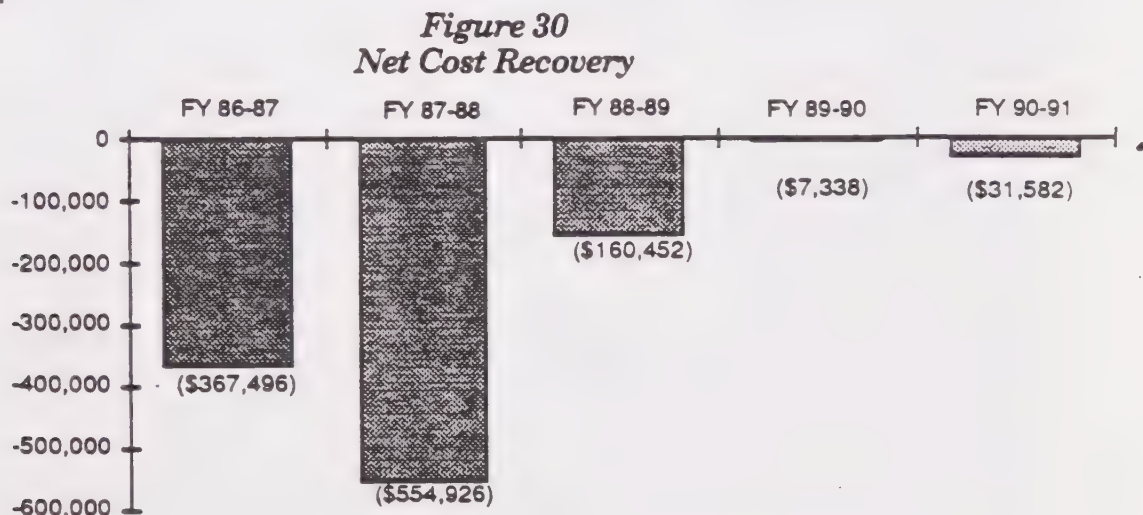


The budget shows a peak in Fiscal Year 1988-89 which coincides with a staff peak the same year. This was the last year that the cartographers



were in this division. In the current fiscal year, staff was transferred to a newly created division, Development and Design. That corresponds with a decrease in budget for the current year.

Figure 30 charts the net result when expenses are subtracted from revenue. As the expenses were always greater, each year had a negative result. The projection for the current year is to recover 98.8% of the expenses.



As illustrated in the chart, for the current and prior fiscal years, cost recovery has been almost complete.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Topic: Batching (Periodic Plan Review)

**Background:** The City is divided into four geographic areas for the purpose of submitting general plan amendments combined with zone changes. These cases are typically for large developments. Each area has two time windows per year when these cases can be submitted. This allows a total of eight times per year when a developer is permitted to apply for a general plan amendment and a zone change. As these applications come in groups, or batches, from each area, the case processing function is commonly referred to as "Batching"; officially, its title is Periodic Plan Review.

As these cases are seeking to change the General Plan, they are substantial by their nature and require comprehensive analysis.

**169. Recommendation:** Increase the number of geographic areas thereby reducing the geographic size of the areas. Because these cases require a comprehensive analysis of a planning area, the area to be studied

needs to be smaller to allow a more thorough analysis and eventually employ analytical models being developed by others. (This study did not permit an in depth study of the optimum number of areas.) Alternative study areas already used by other divisions within Planning should be considered. The Transportation section within Citywide has also grouped the community plan areas into eleven areas. Using geographic areas common to other processes will allow more accurate analysis as various computer models, such as a transportation model, become operational.

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**Topic: Initiation of Cases For Batching**

**Background:** All cases for Batching must be initiated by the City Planning Commission. Historically, all such cases have been approved for processing by the CPC.

**170. Recommendation:** Establish criteria for the CPC to screen out cases that should not be approved for processing or else skip this processing step and accept all cases for processing. Most communities establish strict guidelines for screening this type of application. Ideally, communities are encouraged to develop within the guidelines set forth by their General Plan. Frequently changing the Plan should not be necessary if it is current and comprehensive. This recommendation is coupled with recommendations regarding the development of a current, comprehensive General Plan.

The current process allows all cases to be accepted for processing, or initiated. The staff then engages in a lengthy and extensive study for each case. They also function as the primary filter for recommending approval or denial of each case. Considering the impact on staff time and on the General Plan, the CPC should begin to function as the primary filter and allow only those cases deserving the investment of staff time for analysis. A clear policy regarding the initiation of these cases should be drafted by the Planning Department and submitted for consideration and approval by the CPC and the City Council. The underlying concept is that the General Plan needs to be a stable, consistent document subject to few, if any, changes to be an effective planning document. It is likely that a different criteria would apply to old plans than those recently adopted, i.e., more amendments might be allowed for old plans than for recently adopted plans.

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**Topic: Zone Changes**

**Background:** Zone Changes are processed by the Zone Hearings section of this division (refer to the organization chart, Figure 24). These applications can be submitted throughout the year. They are studied on an individual basis within the context of the area immediately surrounding the parcel(s) identified in the application. Consequently, studies which



determine the benefits of allowing the requested zone changes are conducted on an incremental basis, organized only by the sequence in which applications are submitted.

The Periodic Plan Review (Batching) function processes all cases for a defined geographic area submitted during a defined time window. This allows an analysis of the interrelationships of the requested changes and permits the planner to have a better overall understanding of the affected area.

**171. Recommendation:** Require requests for zone changes to be submitted only during defined time windows for specific geographic areas that coincide with the batching area. The cases should be submitted and processed in a manner that permits planners to be aware of and understand all the changes being requested for a defined area. This cannot be done by allowing zone changes to occur anytime, anywhere in the City. Just as General Plan amendments with zone changes are batched so should zone changes be batched.

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#### **Topic: Organization of Periodic Plan Review and Zone Hearings**

**Background:** When this study began, the Periodic Plan Review function reported through a senior city planner who in turn reported to the principle planner in charge of Plan Implementation. The city planners performed all the processing steps: research, field work, public hearings, writing of the staff report. They were deputized as Hearing Officers for the purposes of conducting public hearings. Their recommendations were submitted to the senior planner, and the principle planner, as needed, for review, modification, and finalization. A single, finalized report was submitted to the CPC for initial review and determination. The process continued through to the Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) committee, the Mayor, and the City Council.

A subsequent reorganization sent the senior planner to Citywide and the staff in Periodic Plan Review was assigned to the Chief Hearing Examiner over Zone Hearings.

Today, in Zone Hearings, the city planners perform the same basic functions and are deputized as Hearing Examiners. They report to a Chief Hearing Examiner who has the civil service classification of Associate Zoning Administrator. Historically, their staff reports are submitted to the Chief Hearing Examiner who reviews them but does not change them. If the Chief Hearing Examiner has a recommendations, he prepares a separate report with his recommendations.

The Chief Hearing Examiner does not conduct any public hearings but does present the recommendations to the CPC. The classification of the

Chief Hearing Examiner should be consolidated into the proposed classifications, Chief Planner I and II, that will replace the Associate Zoning Administrator (AZA) position (see Recommendation 75).

In the near future, Development and Design will be merged with Plan Implementation. As recommended, a Chief Planner will be responsible for a function referred to as Divisions of Land. Having a Chief Planner responsible for Periodic Plan Review and Zone Hearings allows the Chief Planners to backup each other. The processing of cases will be similar between groups and the Chief Planners will have similar duties and functions.

**172.** *Recommendation:* Periodic Plan Review should continue to report to the Chief Hearing Examiner position (that will be changed to Chief Planner). Because the type of cases, level of decision making, and most processes are similar, both groups should continue to report to this position.

This also facilitates implementation of the recommendation to have zone change applications processed in a batching mode. The distinction between the two groups needs to be eliminated. Staff should be allocated for the efficient and effective processing of cases received.

**173.** *Recommendation:* The distinction between hearing officer and hearing examiner should be eliminated by eliminating the hearing examiner concept. Any city planner's recommendations should be subject to review. Here, the hearing officers' recommendations would be reviewed and subject to change by the Chief Planner (formerly the Chief Hearing Examiner) and by higher management, as required.

**174.** *Recommendation:* A single, finalized staff report should be submitted to the CPC from Zone Hearings. The Chief Planner (formerly the Chief Hearing Examiner) would not write a separate report to the CPC. The cases processed by the two groups require considerable decision making on substantial topics. The Periodic Plan Review function could be considered as making more critical decisions as they change the General Plan. There is no functional justification to have the staff reports prepared by Hearing Examiners in Zone Hearing to be treated as unchangeable.

**175.** *Recommendation:* The staff of Zone Hearings should present the departments recommendations to CPC. Such presentations provide opportunities for staff developments.

**176.** *Recommendation:* The Chief Planner positions should be structured to include significant managerial responsibilities for case management and staff utilization.



**177. Recommendation:** With batching of zone changes and consolidation of the zone hearing and batching section, the staffing of the combined units needs to be reassessed. Using the Chief Hearing Examiner's workload guidelines, two hearing examiners at three cases per week would, together, process 264 cases per year (2 city planners x 3 cases/week x 44 weeks). This level of productivity would allow a 17% increase in volume without requiring additional staff. Not having a backlog and being prepared to loan labor indicates that the work group is being under-utilized. A cost savings of \$140,000 per year is anticipated.

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**Topic: Commission Coordinator and Secretariat**

**Background:** The Commission Coordinator and Secretariat not only receives the cases into the Plan Implementation Division but also provides administrative support to CPC. This includes preparing agendas, drafting requests for studies at the request of the CPC, and maintaining records and files for the CPC. When cases are received into this function, they are reviewed to determine if they are complete. If complete, the case is assigned to a planner and the dates for the hearing, submittal of staff report, and date forwarded to the CPC are calendared.

The calendaring function being performed outside the processing function provides an external control on the timeframe allowed for processing of cases.

**178. Recommendation:** Reassign this function to the Council Liaison Office that coordinates with the CPC and City Council. As this function is mostly clerical staff supporting the CPC, it should be assigned to the liaison function to focus and facilitate more effective communications between the whole Department and the CPC. The cases should continue to be initially received into this function, calendared, and then transferred to the cases processing function. This will provide an effective control on the timeframe allowed for processing. In this way the scheduling is being done by others, rather than by the staff assigned to process the cases. This is much like a production control function that establishes the manufacturing schedule. Only when schedules become impractical do the scheduling and processing functions need to discuss timeframes. The liaison function would serve as the advocate of the applicant and of the CPC to hear the case in a timely and prudent manner.

This recommendation is consistent with the merging of Development and Design into Plan Implementation. The merging of two divisions into one will bring a number of processing operations into one organizational group. Moving the Commission Coordinator function prevents this new amalgamation of functions from becoming too diverse and diluting the management of the case processing functions.

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## Topic: Plan Approval

**Background:** The current staff of four planners reviews the plans developed after an applicant's case is approved. Their review insures that the developer is complying with the conditions attached to the approval. These are referred to as conditions of approval and would appear to be conditional zoning which modifies the current zoning to shape development to be more compatible with the desires of the City. It is the planner's responsibility to ensure that the plans comply with the planning guidelines. After the planner certifies that the plans comply, the developer proceeds to Building and Safety where the plans are reviewed for structural integrity and building safety.

The staff's capability to review the plans in an effective and efficient manner is impacted by the availability of the ordinances. When an applicant files for a zone change that is subsequently granted even with additional conditions, the applicant's file should contain all the related case documentation, the determination letter, and associated ordinance. When the applicant's plans are reviewed the case is pulled using the applicant's case number and the relevant documents are reviewed. If the ordinance is missing, the review process becomes more difficult as the ordinance information must now be found. This has occurred with regards to the zoning consistency project (AB283). For a development that is impacted by AB283, Plan Approval needs to review the ordinance (referred to as the ordinance map in the Systems and Mapping section) to determine if any additional conditions, called "Q" conditions, impact on the developer's plans. These ordinances have not been consistently included in the associated case files.

Plan approval staff also prepares reports at the request of the CPC.

**179. Recommendation:** Compile a reference library of the ordinances and Q conditions that pertain to AB283. This will reduce the time required for the staff to search for the needed documentation.

**180. Recommendation:** Provide a database that relates the area numbers in the AB283 ordinances, with zoning and Q conditions. This is predicated on the assumption that GIS is years away from being an on-line resource to professional planners. The staff believes that they can then provide information about Q conditions over the telephone and developers and architects will not need to come to City Hall for the purpose of researching these conditions.

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## Topic: Environmental Impact Reports

**Background:** The problem of slow processing of environmental impact reports in the city of Los Angeles is well known. It was mentioned as a high priority issue in virtually all of our external interviews as well as interviews and discussions within the planning department. This problem has existed for a long time. We obtained an internal department memorandum written in 1983 that essentially suggested the existence of the same issues.

The problem and suggested solutions to solve it were externally studied and documented in a report by the Planning Director dated July 9, 1990. We will not attempt to repeat all of this analysis nor the recommendations here. We concur with virtually all of them. We will expand on the analysis and suggest both short term corrections and more long-term permanent solutions.

Similar to most problems in any organization, the failure to solve environmental concerns rests primarily with planning department management. It is symbolic of a management concern we have seen repeated over and over again throughout the department. (See section on management.) For example, although the environmental impact report problem has for a long time been identified as one of the department's top issues, it has not been given top priority. A review of a few of the July 9th report recommendations indicates:

- ✓ It took eight months to assign the most experienced city planner to work on preparation of the EIR manual.
- ✓ Six months to redefine the Environmental Review Committee.
- ✓ Seven months to transfer the needed second clerk.
- ✓ Eight months to obtain the second computer terminal.

These and similar examples are indications of lack of aggressive attention to a most serious issue.

Table 38 displays a three year history of environmental impact report cases on hand. As can be seen, the backlog of cases was increased by 26 cases between July 1988 and January 1990, but has decreased by 27 cases between January 1990 and April 1991. This indicates positive progress but still leaves a substantial backlog of cases.

*Table 38*  
*Environmental Impact Report Cases on Hand*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Inactive</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Net Change</u>
1988 (July)	33	34	67	-
1989 (January)	32	39	71	+4
1990 (January)	46	47	93	+22
1991 (January)	46	23	69	-24
1991 (April)	37	29	66	-3

Table 39 looks at the data in a slightly different way. It shows the net productivity of the department by reporting period. We have projected total 1991 productivity (excluding staff changes underway as of this writing) based on January-April 1991 productivity. We have also projected total 1991 productivity based on November 1990 to April 1991 productivity which staff feels would be a better measure. While this alternative could be used as an alternative time period projection of staff production for EIR completion, we doubt it is a useful projector for "terminated or withdrawn" EIRs since in December 1990, 27 EIRs were terminated or withdrawn due to a staff action to dispose of older dormant cases. If 80 cases as projected as terminated or withdrawn during 1991 actually took place, it would more than cover all active and inactive cases currently in house, i.e., 66. A more likely projection would be the completion of 6 to 20 EIRs and withdrawal or termination of 30 to 40 EIRs.

The use of "withdrawn or terminated" statistics as well as EIRs completed is useful because considerable staff work is often devoted to EIRs prior to the time they are terminated or withdrawn.

*Table 39*  
*Environmental Impact Report Statistics*

<u>Year</u>	<u>#Received (fees paid)</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Terminated or Withdrawn</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Net Effect on Backlog</u>
1988	10	4	6	10	0
1989	20	9	8	17	+3
1990	20	10	37	47	-27
1991 (Jan-Apr)	6	2	11	13	-7
1991 (Projected)	18	6	33	39	-21
(based on Jan-Apr 91)					
11/90 - 4/91	6	10	40	50	-46
1991 Projected	12	20	80	100	-88
(based on 11/90 to 4/91)					
1991 Likely	12 to 18	6 to 20	30 to 40	36 to 60	-24 to -42
Projection					



Table 40 uses all of the above statistics to project average staff productivity. We project an average of between .66 to 2.2 EIRs per staff plus 3.3 to 4.4 EIRs terminated or withdrawn per staff.

**Table 40**  
**Staff Productivity - Environmental Impact Reports**

<u>Year</u>	<u># of Staff</u>	<u># of EIRs Completed</u>	<u># EIRs Withdrawn or Terminated</u>	<u>EIR Completed Withdrawn or Terminated Per Staff</u>	<u>EIR Per Staff</u>	<u>EIR or Withdrawn Term/S---</u>
1988	6	4	6	1.0	.66	1.0
1989	7	9	8	2.4	1.28	1.14
1990	8	10	37	5.8	1.25	4.6
1991 Projected (based on Jan-Apr)	9	6	33	4.3	.66	3.66
1991 Projected (based on 11/90 - 4/91)	9	20	80	11.1	2.2	8.8
1991 Likely	9	6 to 20	30 to 40	4.0 to 6.6	.66 to 2.2	3.3 to 4.4

Table 41 has been prepared to determine the projected productivity level's impact on the current backlog of cases. This analysis is difficult due to the high variation in the EIR productivity rate and the inability to accurately project how many EIRs will be withdrawn or terminated. Nevertheless, the data does clearly show that a backlog of cases will remain at the end of 1991 based on the current staffing level and level of staff productivity. Should the same status be projected ahead, it would take until January 1993 to clear up the backlog, i.e, annual production equals annual cases received.

**Table 41**  
**Environmental Impact Report Projected Statistics**

<u>Cases On Hand</u>	<u>Active EIRs</u>	<u>Inactive EIRs</u>	<u>Total</u>
January 1991	46	23	69
Plus Projected New Cases	<u>12 to 18</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12 to 18</u>
Subtotal	58 to 64	23	81 to 87
Minus Likely 1991 Staff Productivity	<u>6 to 20</u>	<u>30 - 40</u>	<u>36 to 60</u>
Projected Cases On Hand January 1992	44 to 52	0	27 to 45

The staff productivity level is substantially under that which we consider reasonable. As can be seen in Table 40, the productivity level of .66 to 1.28 EIRs per staff member has been true for the last three years. There appear to be numerous reasons for this low level of productivity as discussed below:

### **Experience**

Most of the staff are new and are not EIR experts. The level of environmental experience and skills we see in many planning departments simply does not exist in Los Angeles. Additionally, many of the specialist skills we would have expected to see, such as an archaeologist or biologist, do not exist.

Staff indicates that they require 120 - 180 hours to review a draft EIR. This is 2 or 3 times the time we believe an experienced staff person should require.

### **Training**

The training available to the staff is minimal. The Department does not reimburse staff for professional membership in an environmental organization. Limited funds are available for conference registration and publications. In house training is conducted irregularly. At a recent CEQA update conference only two of the staff were allowed to attend. These conferences are highly useful in training EIR staff.

### **Quality of Consultants**

Staff complain about the quality of documents submitted by consultants. Although professional ethics would normally require these professionals to submit independent professional analysis, they are hired by the developers and in some instances may represent "developer" positions rather than "professional" positions.

Table 42 lists active EIR consultants in the City of Los Angeles who have completed final EIRs. As can be seen, the average number of drafts required by consultant ranges between 3 to 5.5. Although the type of EIR processed, as well as the staff assigned to the EIR, may vary, the table gives some insight into the issue. In a well operating process we would expect no more than 3 drafts to be a reasonable number.

*Table 42*  
*Average Number of EIR Drafts Required by Consultant*  
*for the Last 28 EIRs Completed in Los Angeles*

<u>Consultant</u>	<u>Average Number of Drafts Required</u>	<u>Number of EIRs Finalized In Los Angeles</u>
EIP	3.0	1
ETI	3.2	5
ESA	3.33	3
City of Los Angeles		231
		Plan Implementation Division



<u>Consultant</u>	<u>Average Number of Drafts Required</u>	<u>Number of EIRs Finalized In Los Angeles</u>
Gruen	3.5	2
Hinzdell	3.5	2
EPA	3.5	2
PCR	3.7	3
Ultra Systems	3.7	3
Handleman	4.0	1
Pace	4.0	1
Impact Science	4.0	1
MBA	5.5	4

### **City Planner Review**

The work of assistant and associate planners is reviewed by city planners prior to being returned to the consultants. In some instances the city planners are repeating the work of the assistant or associate planners. Instead, the city planners should focus on a much quicker, quality check and on training assistant and associate planners to do a better review in the first place.

### **Policy Base**

In some respects problems in the environmental review function are created by broader city and department problems discussed elsewhere in this report. There is a lack of a clear policy base (i.e., plans) as well as technical studies to be used as a basis for environmental analysis. This means staff must often fabricate or find secondary resources for analysis.

The absence of a clear, up-to-date EIR policy manual is also an obvious problem.

### **Political Interference**

We have already commented under "quality of consultants" about the problem of "developer" rather than "professional" oriented documents. CEQA requires the city, not the developer or consultant to actually certify the adequacy of the EIR.

When developers challenge the actions of staff, planning department management does not always support a clear professional opinion. We understand how difficult this is when the department is unresponsive in processing EIRs on a timely basis. Nevertheless, in the long run this kind of action only further accentuates the problem.

It is not uncommon for developers and attorneys to meet at the highest management levels in the department to argue their EIR case. We believe this is normally quite inappropriate.

### Department of Transportation

The Department of transportation review of EIRs has been a problem for the planning department. These reviews often take as long as eight months. Additionally, DOT does not generally provide comments on the first draft, but rather later in the process.

### Timing

The department has established the priorities and goals for the EIR process as shown in Table 43.

**Table 43**  
***Planning Department Environmental Processing Goals***

<b>Priority Category</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Turnaround Goal (Average time from receipt in EIR Section)</b>
1	FEIR Review	CPA: 4-6 weeks CP: 1-2 weeks
	FEIR Prep	CPA: 2 mos. from end of comments CP: 1-2 weeks
2	NOP	2 weeks from fees and completed materials
3	NOC Publish & DEIR Circulation	1-2 weeks
4	Data Base Review	CPA: 2 months CP: 2-3 weeks

Within each priority category (e.g., data base review) the order of priority is first-come, first served.

We completed a tally of the department's EIR log for current cases pending as shown in Table 44.



*Table 44*  
*Environmental Processing Time for Currently Active Cases*  
*(Calendar Days)*

<u>Process</u>	<u>City Time</u>			<u>Consultant Time</u>		
	<u>low</u>	<u>median</u>	<u>high</u>	<u>low</u>	<u>median</u>	<u>high</u>
a. Fees paid to notice of preparation	1	15	456	-	-	-
b. Notice of preparation to first draft received	-	-	-	32	178	623
c. Data base received to transfer from assistant or associate planner to city planner	4	80	619	-	-	-
d. From city planner to consultant	1	43	222	-	-	-
e. First data base received to comments back to consultant	5	100	344	-	-	-
f. Consultant's time on second data base	-	-	-	2	78	768
g. From second data base received to return to consultant	5	43	196	-	-	-
h. Consultant time on third data base	-	-	-	6	40	137
i. Third data base* received to draft EIR circulation	38	99	407	-	-	-
j. Draft EIR circulated to final EIR to decision makers	57	208	435	-	-	-

\* Could include 4th, 5th, or 6th data base

We show the low and high number of days for each category and a median number of days. Our analysis will comment on the median number of days.

The median time of 15 days from fees paid to notice of preparation (category a) is a normal amount of time found in many agencies. The department's current target is 2 weeks.

Following the notice of preparation, the consultants are taking a median time of 6 months to submit their first draft (category b).

The median time for the city assistant or associate planner to review the first draft (item c) is 80 days. The planning department's target time is 2 months. We suggest a reasonable target of 30 days. This is followed by the city planner review (item d) which is adding another 43 days. The department's target for this review is 2-3 weeks. We suggest this be established at 14 days. The median time for items c & d together is 100 days. This is the time from when the city receives the first draft until it is returned to the consultant. Using our proposed targets of 30 days and 14 days would mean a turnaround time of 44 days.

The consultants take a median time of 78 days to return the second draft (item f) and the department uses another 43 days (item g) to review the second draft.

The consultants take another 40 days to prepare the third draft (item h) and the department takes another 99 days to review and circulate (item i). The department's goal for this action is 5-8 weeks. We suggest a more appropriate target of 30 days.

Finally, the department is taking 208 days after circulating the EIR to final the EIR and send to the decision maker (item j). This is contrasted to the department's goal of 2-1/2 months. We suggest a target of 30 days from the end of the comment period.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **Short Term**

**181.** *Recommendations:* We wholeheartedly support the following June 20th recommendations of the planning director.

1. Two additional City Planners will be assigned immediately in the short term to help relieve the backlog at the City Planner review level, and to permit the EIR Manual update to continue.
2. Outside training and process consulting services need to be retained immediately to ensure that EIR reviews are conducted most efficiently without loss of quality and legal defensibility (per Task 7). The Department has hired Mr. Ron Bass, Director of



Planning at Jones and Stokes Associates, the former Director of the State Clearinghouse and a well-known authority on CEQA and environmental impact procedures.

3. Use outside first or second readers approved by the Department and hired by applicants on major EIRs which are most appropriate for such review.
4. Work with Department of Transportation top management to resolve DOT backlog of traffic study reviews for EIRs.
5. Move forward expeditiously with on-call contract system to allow Department within the next two months to hire consultants to augment review private project EIRs, in conjunction with the Major Projects Trust Fund Ordinance. If successful, the process can also be used to relieve other backlogged cases.
6. Establish a policy to require public scoping meetings for major, controversial EIRs, in order to ensure a more thorough understanding of issues, alternatives, and potential mitigation measures by the EIR consultant and staff early in the EIR process.

These recommendations should be immediately implemented at the department's own initiative. The goal should be to remove all backlog within six months and establish an appropriate staff/consultant level, i.e., sufficient to provide a system in balance, i.e., the same number of EIRs are processed per EIR cycle as are received.

Additionally, we recommend that the use of the training consultant (Ron Bass) be continued for at least a full year.

We also particularly support and emphasize the use of one or more outside environmental consultants to work along side of staff to review EIRs. This will provide a much needed peer model for staff, generate new ideas, and help establish reasonable productivity expectations. However, the hiring of consultants should be completed within one month rather than the two months as proposed by the planning director.

#### Management Support

**182.** *Recommendation:* Departmental management needs to support environmental staff. This means:

- ✓ Acting in a more timely way to solve problems and provide assistance.

- ✓ Protecting staff from undo political interference.
- ✓ Establishing clear departmental EIR policy.

#### Staff

**183.** *Recommendation:* Some of the staff in the environmental unit appear to be inappropriately placed. Such staff should be transferred to more appropriate functions. New staff when possible should have prior EIR experience. Additionally, there is a lack of specialists within the unit or department to support the environmental review. Future recruiting efforts should look to add specialists in biology, archeology, or similar expertise.

#### Training

**184.** *Recommendation:* An ongoing environmental training program should be developed. All staff should attend an annual CEQA update conference. The proposed use of Ron Bass for training should be extended for at least one year.

#### Private Consultants

**185.** *Recommendation:* The department should meet with private consultants as a group at least quarterly to share mutual concerns and clarify city policy. These meetings should be attended by high level planning department management.

Several of the consultants being used by developers may be producing inadequate documents. When this problem cannot be corrected at the staff level, the planning director or a deputy director should arrange a meeting with the principal of the consulting firm to review the problem. When this cannot be corrected, the department should notify the developer that it is personally taking over the completion of the EIR from the consultant. Under the deposit system, the developer will be billed for this service. The department should consult with the city attorney to set the proper legal trail for such action.

**186.** *Recommendation:* As part of the continuing review of the environmental process, the City should look at the options of the City selecting the environmental consultant rather than the developer.

#### Fees and Deposits

**187.** *Recommendation:* The city work on review of EIRs should be on a full cost recovery system, including not only planning, but other departments inputting to the review process. This will require all participating departments to develop a time keeping accounting system. At



the outset of the EIR process, the developer will make a substantial deposit to the account. As this is exhausted, additional deposits will be requested or lacking such deposits, work should stop on the process. Such a system can provide needed resources for the EIR review process. It has the added benefit of penalizing developers who choose consultants that do not prepare adequate EIRs.

#### Department of Transportation

**188.** *Recommendation:* The planning department should meet with the Department of Transportation to work out an agreement on timelines for DOT review of EIRs. We suggest DOT review the data base with a 30 day target for turnaround. If staffing is a problem, the proposed new deposit system should provide necessary funds for additional staff. DOTs review should also take place on the first data base. Reviews that come later in the EIR process are less valuable because it becomes more difficult to integrate changes. If a good procedure cannot be formulated with DOT, the planning department should consider staffing to conduct the transportation review internal in the planning department.

#### Notice to Developers

**189.** *Recommendation:* The department should develop a clear one or two page handout for developers to be used prior to the developer hiring their consultant. Such handout would specify the city and consultants responsibilities, clarify that the consultants role is to provide professional environmental review rather than to represent the developer, indicate that the more drafts required, the longer the review and higher the cost, indicate that staff wishes to work with the EIR consultant - not the developer and attorneys, and furnish a list of the track record of each consultant.

#### Developers and Attorneys

**190.** *Recommendation:* Contact between the environmental staff and developers and developer's attorneys should be severely limited. Primary contact should be between the environmental staff and the environmental consultant.

#### City Planners Review

**191.** *Recommendation:* The City Planners primary focus of work should be on training associate and assistant planners in how to review EIRs and in quality control. The City Planners should not repeat the work of the assistants and associates. Normally, the City Planner review should be completed in 5 - 15 hours.

#### Review Times

**192.** *Recommendation:* The department should set a time target for each step of the environmental review process. Our suggested time lines are as follows:

**Table 45**  
**Environmental Review Timelines in Calendar Days**

	<u>Existing Department Goal</u>	<u>Existing Actual Median Time</u>	<u>Suggested New Goal</u>
Fees Paid to Notice of Preparation	14	15	14
Review of First Draft (Data Base)	77	100	44
Review of Subsequent Drafts	77	43	21
Review of Pre-Circulation Draft to Draft EIR Circulation	49	99	30
Draft EIR circulated, to final EIR to decision makers	75	208	30

#### **EIR Manual**

**193.** *Recommendation:* The environmental manual which is being drafted should be reviewed and used immediately rather than waiting for full completion. As other sections of the manual are completed, they can be added.

#### **Case Tracking**

**194.** *Recommendation:* Environmental Impact Reports should be added to the department's case tracking system.

#### **Topic: Environmental Review/Negative Declarations**

**Background:** Projects requiring initial study are handled in a variety of ways as shown in Table 46.

**Table 46**  
**Handling of Initial Study**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Who Handles</u>
Batching	Project Planner
Zoning	Project Planner
Zoning Administration	EIR Unit
Subdivision	EIR Unit
Site Plan	Project Planner
Community Plan	Project Planner
Code Studies	Project Planner



The EIR unit essentially has one person writing roughly 75% of the 1200 environmental assessments a year. This is an impressive production level and it appears that few of these assessments have been challenged. Because of the volume of reviews, no site visit is possible by the person writing the review.

Although we were not in a position to analyze the quality of the reviews, the high volume and lack of a site visit could be signs of a potential problem. We did review a few negative declarations. Some of these appear to be using a so called "naked checklist". This is a list that is not well documented and in many communities is increasingly a basis for litigation. It appears that roughly 1-4 hours of staff time per review is used. This is substantially below what we would expect to see. Should this reviewer retire or be transferred, it could result in a serious staffing problem.

**195. Recommendation:** Environmental review for the Zoning Administrator and Subdivision units should be transferred to the project planners, similar to the process being used elsewhere in the Department. This transfer should be phased in slowly over a year period. The EIR unit staff should be responsible for training staff in this review function.

**196. Recommendation:** Site visits should be completed as part of all initial studies.

**197. Recommendation:** Staff should avoid using a "naked checklist."

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## IX. ZONING ADMINISTRATION

### OVERVIEW

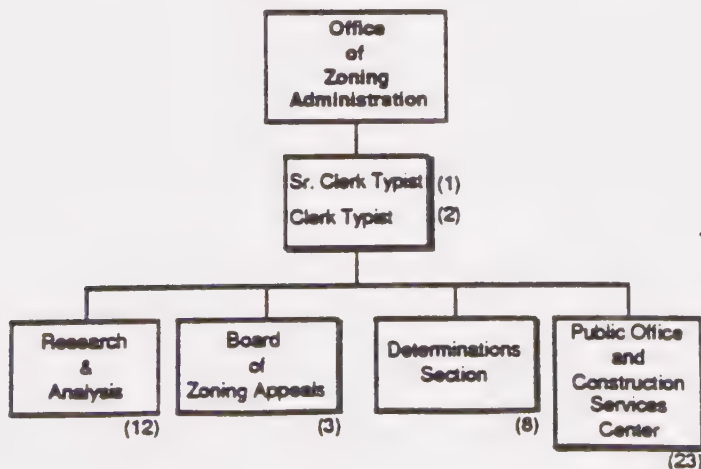
As set forth in the Los Angeles Municipal Code, Chapter 98, the Office of Zoning Administration is responsible for the investigation and determination of all applications for land use and area zone variances, conditional use permits, temporary geological (oil) exploratory coreholes, approval of controlled oil drill sites, determinations on conditions and methods of operations for oil drilling, slight modifications, coastal development permits and for interpretations of certain specified zoning regulations (ZAI cases) relating to a number of matters. The process must be completed within a 75 day time frame unless extended by the Division.

The Office of Zoning Administration also makes determinations on appeals from zoning enforcement decisions made by the Department of Building and Safety. A determination made by a Zoning Administrator is final on most matters unless, as permitted in the statute, selected items may be subsequently appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Matters relating only to conditional use and zone variances may be appealed to City Council for final determination. Appeals filed with the Board of Zoning Appeals must be heard within a 75 day timeframe, as mandated, unless extended by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The Office of Zoning Administration is also responsible for the operation and management of the Division's public counters, located at: Fourth Floor Construction Service Counter, San Pedro, West Los Angeles and Valley. The public counters are responsible for the review and intake of cases. However, all cases are transported to and processed in the downtown central office.

As shown in Figure 31 below, the Office of Zoning Administration has five divisions employing 51 authorized positions.

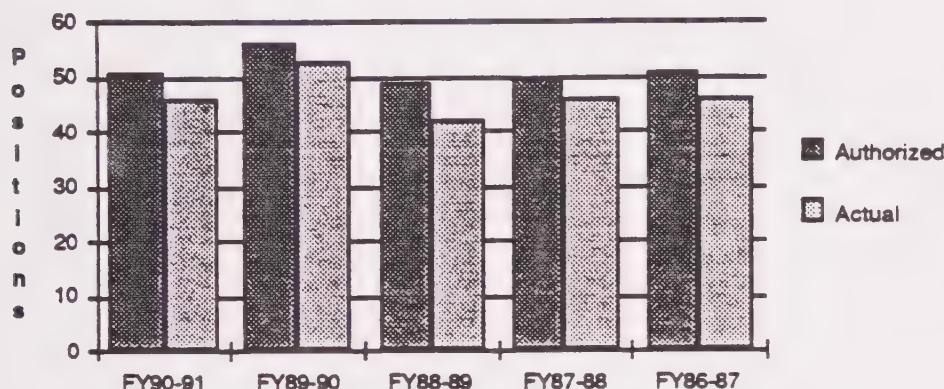
**Figure 31**  
**Organization**





As shown in Figure 32, staffing in the Zoning Administration office has remained relatively constant over the last five years despite the various organizational transfers of functions to other Divisions and/or units within the Department.

**Figure 32**  
**Zoning Administrator's Staffing Levels**



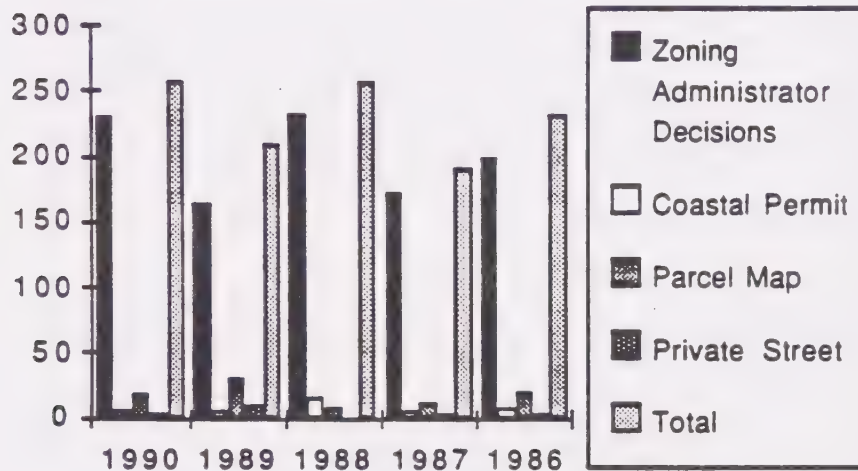
As shown in Table 47, the total number of applications and cases processed by this Division has remained relatively constant during the last five years. During this same period, the case mix has changed somewhat. The number of cases involving Conditional Use permits has increased to a level where these applications now represent 28% of the Division's caseload followed by Yard and Zone Variance cases. These increases have been offset by a decline in the number of cases involving slight modifications and Zoning Administrator Interpretations. The changing nature of the Division's caseload has implications relative to workload and attendant staffing requirements discussed later in this report.

**Table 47**  
**Zoning Administration Applications**

	1990	%	1989	%	1988	%	1987	%	1986	%
Zone Variance	218	15	210	14	185	12	203	13	188	12
Conditional Use Permits	402	28	395	26	385	25	391	26	349	22
Oil	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	7	-
Yard Variance	311	21	297	19	255	16	242	15	242	16
Slight Modification	178	12	193	13	194	13	244	15	258	17
Zoning Administrator's Interpretation	157	11	167	11	267	16	245	15	288	18
Board of Zoning Appeals	139	10	223	15	195	13	175	12	162	11
Coastal	18	1	20	1	29	2	38	2	27	2
Board of Zoning Appeals (Transfer)	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Building & Safety	13	1	22	1	26	2	34	2	16	1
Non-Conforming	14	1	5	-	8	1	7	-	19	1
	1,450		1,532		1,544		1,579		1,556	

As shown in Figure 33 below, the number of applications appealed to the BZA over the last five years has remained relatively constant. It is currently 13 percent of all applications completed. The average time lapsed from submittal of appeal to hearing is 56 days which is well within the 75 day mandated requirement.

**Figure 33**  
**Board of Zoning Administration Cases**



However, during the last year, the number of appeals filed to both BZA and the City Council increased, specifically with respect to applications from Building & Safety decisions and those requiring conditional use permits relating to alcohol or adult entertainment on premises.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Topic: Organizational Structure**

**Background:** The Zoning Administrator (ZA) is a statutorily defined function whose classification, independent decision-making authority, organizational role and responsibilities and compensation are based to a great extent on perception, interpretation and historical practice of the Department.

The Chief Zoning Administrator directs the activities of the Associate Zoning Administrator and establishes policies and procedures for the Office of Zoning Administration. This individual supervises staff, acts on appeals from Building and Safety, consults with other public officials, including City Council, on zoning matters, advises applicants and acts on some variances, conditional uses, and other zoning matters.



The Division currently has seven Associate Zoning Administrators (AZA). These individuals are assigned geographic areas to review cases and hold public hearings at least one day a week. AZA act on variances, conditional uses and other zoning matters before them in a quasi-judicial capacity. Decisions of the AZA are final unless appealed. The AZA position is considered a senior level management position within the Department's wage and salary structure.

The Zoning Investigator is an entry level position in the Department similar to the Planning Assistant classification. The Zoning Investigator conducts research and prepares the findings report submitted to the AZA for cases awaiting determinations. The Division currently has 11.5 Zoning Investigators who are under the direction of a City Planner. Like the AZA, the Zoning Investigators are assigned geographic areas of responsibility when assigning and researching cases.

Our review noted the current organization structure of the Office of Zoning Administrator results in a sub-optimization of the Division's staff at all levels. As discussed above, currently a City Planner is assigned to supervise the 11.5 FTE Zoning Investigators (ZI) (City Planning Associates) who perform research and related activities for cases under review by the AZA. Employee questionnaires and department interviews confirmed that the ZI and City Planner are considered undesirable assignments within the Department. This perception is held by both individual staff and managers currently working in the unit and their colleagues in other division and sections within the Department. The reasons supporting this perception are noteworthy and include, but are not limited to the following:

- The current supervisory span of control (1 City Planner to 12 Zoning Investigators) is too broad and is approximately 3-4 times that assigned to other City Planner positions within the Department. This results in limited supervision and development of the ZI staff. The limited supervision manifests itself in several ways, including low morale of staff, quality control problems encountered by the Associate Zoning Administrators in reviewing case reports produced by the unit, and limited career development and subsequent advancement by the Zoning Investigators assigned to this important function.
- The level of accountability and responsibility for Zoning Investigator's who are professional staff is inconsistent with the classification and job duties assigned to other similar professionals in the Department and other divisions. The ZI researches and compiles facts, writes them up and submits them to the Zoning Administrator's office for some future determination. There is no recommendation submitted along with the findings, no recognition of the professional performing the work, and no follow-through for accountability or participation of that individual in the final hearing or decision-

making process. This distinction and segmentation of low level of functional responsibility is inconsistent with the level of responsibility and accountability for professional work assigned to Planning Associates in other Division including the Division of Land and PID.

- AZA are performing additional research and writing reports to compensate for the inadequacies of the ZI. These are unnecessary activities that should be performed by lower-paid staff members, particularly given the qualifications and compensation of the AZA and ZI classifications. The efficiency and effectiveness of the AZA is inextricably linked to the work performed by the ZI. Moreover, due to the physical and organizational separation between AZA and ZI, there is limited opportunity for entry-level staff employees (ZI) to receive the benefit of working under the direction of these highly skilled and experienced professionals. Finally, the AZA is a senior level management position within the Department and the only such classified position that does not have supervisory responsibilities. Given the interrelationship with ZI and the compensation level for this position, this is an inappropriate distinction.

**198. Recommendation:** The AZA and ZI roles and responsibilities within the Division should be broadened to more efficiently and effectively utilize the unique knowledge and skills of these respective professionals. This could be accomplished by reorganizing and consolidating the Zoning Investigators and AZA into a single unit. Each AZA would be assigned at least two Zoning Investigators and responsible for supervising their activities pertaining to the research and writing of cases awaiting their determination. The AZA will continue to conduct the public hearings and based on those proceedings render a determination. The Zoning Investigator will prepare the written documentation for the AZA's approval and distribution. The relationship between the two positions will be analogous to that which exists between a Judge and a law clerk. The delegation of greater responsibility to ZI coupled with closer supervision by a more experienced professional should significantly enhance the development opportunities and thus the attraction of this important position. Moreover, the delegation of lower level duties and responsibilities should significantly enhance the opportunities available to the AZA to focus their efforts on hearing more cases and addressing the more substantive issues related thereto. Finally, the organization linkage between the research, report writing and determination should enhance accountability for the timely processing of cases.

**199. Recommendation:** Under the recommended realignment, the City Planner position responsible for the supervision of the Zoning Investigators should be reassigned to other duties within the Department.



**200.** *Recommendation:* The Zoning Investigator classification should be deleted and employees assigned to staff functions in the unit bear the same titles as their peers in other divisions within the Department -- Planning Assistant, City Planning Associate.

**201.** *Recommendation:* The Planning Assistant and City Planning Associate position in this unit should be designated as the initial assignment for personnel in these classes. Assignment to these staff positions should be for a period of 18 to 30 months and included as part of an overall Department-wide job rotation program discussed later in this report.

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**Topic: Workload, Staffing and Service Level**

*Background:* The workload for this division emanates from the number and type of cases submitted for determination within mandated time review cycle. As previously discussed, the Division handles a number of different cases which has remained relatively constant in terms of their numbers and proportional mix. Over the last five years, the Division has received an average of 142 and completed 140 cases each month. The City Code stipulates that Zoning applications must be decided upon within 75 days from the date an application is received and accepted.

The Division's employees are assigned and perform related tasks in three functional areas involved in processing the Division's workload. These include:

- Zoning Investigators are responsible for conducting the research for each of the cases received and processed by this Division. This typically requires a staff member to conduct an on-site inspection of the site, research appropriate ordinances and regulations, draft findings, review, edit and submit a report to a supervisor which in turn is submitted to an AZA for use in making a determination of the matters. The Division currently uses a managerial estimate of four cases completed by ZI each week as their benchmark for assessing staffing requirements relative to workload. Based on the current staffing level (11.5 FTE) and yardstick, the ZI should complete 2,208 cases (or 230 per month) during F.Y. 1990-91, which is significantly (60%) above the current level of production. Our analysis of Zoning Investigator staffing levels focused on evaluating the number of cases being processed by each staff member and the amount of time being spent by respective ZI on case research activities. As shown in Table 48, our review noted the ZI are completing an average of 3 cases per week, which supports the Division's current production rate of 140 cases each month. Furthermore,

*Table 48*  
*City of Los Angeles Planning Department*  
*Time Sheet Analysis*

Inspectors			Asst. Zoning Administrators		
Work Code	Average Hours Per Case	Number Of Cases	Work Code	Average Hours Per Case	Number Of Cases
AV	12.27	11	AV	0.00	0
BS	0.00	0	BS	4.00	1
BZA	7.00	2	BZA	1.37	16
CCR	5.00	1	CCR	2.67	3
CDP	14.25	8	CDP	6.00	3
CU	7.50	10	CU	0.00	0
CUB	8.12	24	CUB	3.99	48
CUE	0.00	0	CUE	4.00	2
CUX	5.00	5	CUX	2.50	2
CUZ	7.98	51	CUZ	4.19	101
EIR	0.00	0	EIR	4.00	3
F	8.93	15	F	2.40	20
NC	3.81	9	NC	2.88	8
PAB	1.50	2	PAB	0.00	0
PAD	6.75	4	PAD	4.36	11
PC	15.25	4	PC	0.00	0
PM	0.00	0	PM	4.00	1
PP	4.50	6	PP	4.00	1
R	0.00	0	R	8.50	2
RV	0.00	0	RV	11.33	3
SM	0.00	0	SM	0.89	9
SP	8.00	1	SP	5.00	1
ST	0.00	0	ST	2.00	1
TH	0.00	0	TH	4.00	1
YV	6.69	37	YV	3.64	55
ZA	7.40	5	ZA	2.25	2
ZV	7.40	33	ZV	4.51	37
ALL	7.83	228	ALL	3.81	331
RANGE	15.25-1.50		RANGE	8.50-1.37	
Average Cases Per Person Per Week		3.2	Average Cases Per Person Per Week		5.5
Average Billable Hours Per Person Per Week		24.80	Average Billable Hours Per Person Per Week		21.00



our analysis indicates there are significant variances among the employees in the unit with respect to the number of hours and percent of time spent on case management related activities and the number of cases being processed.

- Associate Zoning Administrator is responsible for reviewing and analyzing the case findings submitted by the Zoning Investigators; in selected circumstances conducting on-site inspections; researching ordinances and other applicable rules, regulations and guiding precedents; writing a report; conducting a public hearing; writing up a case determination; and distributing it to concerned parties. Similar to ZI, the Division currently uses a managerial estimate of four cases per AZA per week. Based on current staffing level (7 FTE) the AZA will conduct hearings and make determinations on 105 cases a month, which is significantly below the current production rate. Similar to ZI, our analysis of the AZA staffing focused on evaluating the number and nature of the cases being processed by each staff member and the amount of time being spent by the AZA on client case management activities. Our review noted that AZAs are completing an average of 5 cases a week, or 140 cases a month, which is significantly above the current management estimate. This analysis supports the Division current monthly production rate of 142 cases. Similar to ZI, our analysis, as shown in Table 49, noted significant variance exists among the AZA with regard to the number of cases being handled and amount of time being spent on the various cases and on direct case management activities for the various cases.

Finally, our review noted that it is currently taking an average of 94 days from intake to completion for Zoning Administration cases. This is above the mandated time requirement of 75 days.

**202. Recommendation:** The Division should develop and implement a comprehensive case management and evaluation system. This is a standard management information tool used in most case processing functions -- Health Care, Mental Health, Criminal Justice, Engineering, etc. A Case Management System will require management and staff to develop an evaluation matrix and estimates regarding the level of effort and time required to complete each type of case. It is possible to differentiate types of cases within the same classification based on their unique conditions. These estimates will be developed into an overall system and used by the AZA in assessing the time required for cases being reviewed, the existing workload from cases on hand and the current caseload of the respective staff members. The initial managerial estimates will be supported by data collected from the employee time sheets on hours charged to each case thereby enabling management to validate or change the current allocation. The Case Management system will take the Department approximately one year to design, implement and fully utilize.

Table 49  
page 1 of 2

City of Los Angeles Planning Department  
Zoning Administration Division  
Time Use Analysis

Assistant Zoning Administrators

	Tramel	Lillenberg	Crisp	Fisher	Perica	Landini	Green	All
<b>Non Case</b>								
Administration/ Supervision	8.18%	10.66%		11.78%	5.76%	13.98%	41.88%	10.95%
Case Processing	1.21%	3.17%						0.70%
Holiday	8.49%	8.07%	7.50%	4.83%	7.27%	7.29%	5.00%	7.08%
Meeting	3.03%							0.47%
Other	0.61%	2.59%	13.44%		9.39%	1.22%	25.63%	6.05%
Public Information/ Contact	10.30%	12.97%	12.50%	12.08%	8.79%			8.76%
Shift Time-Time Owed	0.61%	0.58%		4.23%	1.21%	1.82%	1.25%	1.40%
Sick	3.03%							0.47%
Training				0.60%				0.09%
Vacation	4.24%	8.65%	2.50%	3.02%	7.88%	8.21%		5.36%
Sub-Total (Non Case)	39.70%	46.69%	35.94%	36.56%	40.30%	32.52%	73.75%	41.31%
<b>Case</b>								
BS			1.25%					0.19%
BZA	3.33%		3.44%					1.02%
CCR	2.42%							0.37%
CDP			2.81%			2.74%		0.84%
CUB	6.06%	10.66%	13.28%	18.13%	2.12%	6.69%	1.88%	8.92%
CUE				1.21%			2.50%	0.37%
CUX		1.44%						0.23%
CUZ	26.06%	14.41%	12.34%	11.10%	37.27%	26.75%		19.71%
EIR	2.42%						2.50%	0.56%
F	3.64%	2.02%	2.50%	0.60%		5.78%		2.24%
NC	2.73%		1.56%	2.72%				1.07%
PAD	2.12%	5.76%		1.81%	1.82%	1.82%	1.88%	2.24%
PM						1.22%		0.19%
PP				1.21%				0.19%
RV				10.27%		5.17%		2.38%
SM				2.42%				0.37%
SP	1.52%							0.23%
ST					0.61%			0.09%
TH	1.21%							0.19%
YV	6.06%	5.48%	16.56%	5.14%	10.61%	12.16%	10.00%	9.32%
ZA		1.15%		0.15%				0.21%
ZV	2.73%	12.39%	10.31%	8.69%	7.27%	5.17%	7.50%	7.77%
Sub Total (Cases)	60.30%	53.31%	64.06%	63.44%	59.70%	67.48%	26.25%	58.69%
Totals	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



Table 49  
page 2 of 2

City of Los Angeles Planning Department  
Zoning Administration Division  
Time Use Analysis

Inspectors

	Augustin	Bengali	Binder	Gibson	Los	Mullis	Pool	Richardson	All
<b>Non Case</b>									
Administration/ Supervision							1.21%	3.33%	0.57%
Case Processing					4.67%	21.21%			3.24%
Holiday	7.27%	9.97%	7.27%	7.27%	7.48%	7.27%	7.27%	7.58%	7.67%
Meeting							1.82%		0.23%
Miscellaneous									0.00%
Other	0.61%				5.61%		1.21%	0.30%	0.95%
Public Information/ Contact					18.07%		0.61%		2.29%
Shift Time-Time Owed	1.21%	2.49%	1.82%	1.82%		4.24%	1.21%	1.21%	1.75%
Sick	24.24%	3.12%		3.03%	7.17%	3.03%	3.03%	33.33%	9.65%
Training			2.42%				0.30%	1.21%	0.50%
Vacation	12.12%		3.94%	12.12%	5.61%	6.67%			5.07%
Sub-Total (Non Case)	45.45%	15.58%	15.45%	24.24%	48.60%	42.42%	16.67%	46.97%	31.92%
<b>Case</b>									
AV	5.15%		27.58%		5.30%	3.03%			5.15%
BZA				1.52%	2.80%				0.53%
CCR				1.52%					0.19%
CDP	7.58%		26.97%						4.35%
CU			11.52%		11.53%				2.86%
CUB	26.36%				0.58%	2.12%	14.85%	15.15%	7.43%
CUX	1.82%				4.36%		1.52%		0.95%
CUZ	1.82%	43.30%		33.94%	15.89%	16.97%	13.03%		15.52%
7		16.20%		24.24%			0.61%		5.11%
NC	3.64%			2.73%	2.57%		1.52%		1.31%
PAB							0.91%		0.11%
PAD						2.12%		6.06%	1.03%
PC			18.48%						2.33%
PP	0.30%						7.88%		1.03%
SP						2.42%			0.31%
TV	3.03%	10.28%		5.76%	5.80%	7.58%	20.30%	22.73%	9.44%
ZA						6.97%	4.24%		1.41%
ZV	4.85%	14.64%		6.06%	2.57%	16.36%	18.48%	9.09%	9.01%
Sub Total (Cases)	54.55%	84.42%	84.55%	75.76%	51.40%	57.58%	83.33%	53.03%	68.01%
Totals	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

During the interim, the current method of assessing staffing requirements based on case volumes should be adequate provided the yardsticks are adjusted based on recommendations discussed below.

**203.** *Recommendation:* The Division should establish minimum targets for number of hours spent by the ZI on case management activities. A recommended target of 30 hours a week or 90% of the Zoning Investigators' available time (2080 hours, less allowance for vacation, etc.) should be spent on case management activities. This additional time can be accomplished through improved supervision and direction and the assignment of clerical support to relieve the professional staff of these duties. Achievement of this standard will increase the existing staff's case management activity capacity 22%. Assuming the staff is able to achieve the production rate of a minimum of 4 cases per employee a week for ZI and the current caseload of 140 new cases a month continues, the Division should be able to eliminate all cases currently in inventory awaiting processing within seven months of implementation. The cases in inventory includes all cases received to date including that month that have not been completed. The elimination of the cases in inventory should enable the Division to process research on all cases within 30 days of receipt. Moreover, once the cases in inventory have been eliminated the Division will require 9.5 FTE in this unit based on the recommended staff production yardstick. It is important to note the reduction in FTEs should not be done until the previously discussed reorganization has been fully implemented and the cases in inventory are brought within the 30 day timeframe.

**204.** *Recommendation:* As previously discussed, the Zoning Investigator's role and responsibilities should be expanded to more fully integrate the research staff in the case management function and responsibilities. The additional duties including inputting text directly into word processing terminals, submitting recommendations along with written report, attending hearings and writing determinations. The additional work activities should be accomplished with the existing yardstick of four cases a week, which approximates 1 case a day.

**205.** *Recommendation:* The Division should establish a minimum target for the number of hours spent by the AZA on case management activities. Our analysis indicates approximately 25% of the AZA's time is spent on non-direct case activities, including attending meetings with Council Offices, and dealing with public inquiries both on the telephone and walk-in at their non-public public counter. It appears that a substantial portion of the AZAs' time has evolved into providing information for Council offices and concerned constituents. While these services may be needed and prove to be politically valuable, it is a very expensive use of senior staff and has significant impact on the workflow and AZAs' case



production responsibilities. The AZAs should focus 85-90% of their available time on case management activities including conducting hearings and supervising the work of their research staff. This objective could be accomplished by reorganizing the AZA's office and the re-assignment of duties and responsibilities of the professional staff including:

**206. Recommendation.** Assigning 1 AZA full time to manage the Construction Service Counter, answer public inquiries, provide over-the-counter screening and provide approval of some cases. This individual would, hopefully, reduce the number of cases requiring staff research and analysis, and improve the quality of case applications submitted and accepted and ultimately reviewed by the research staff. The assignment of the AZA position will also strengthen the management organization and capabilities of the entire Department's counter services.

**207. Recommendation.** Initially assign the 6 remaining AZAs to case processing function including conducting hearings and working with the ZI. With the delegation of duties and responsibilities, the AZA should be able to conduct initially 12 hearings a week. The actual number would be dependent upon the results of the case management analyses. However, 12 appears to be consistent with 85-90% utilization and managerial estimates. A hearing caseload of 12 per week per AZA will enable these individuals to keep pace in terms of hearings with the production of the ZI case research recommended above.

The key to improving the Division's case processing time and developing the Zoning Investigator is the role and responsibility and productivity of the AZA. We recognize the implementation of this recommendation will be a difficult process for the entire Department. However, because of its far-sweeping implications, we recommend that implementation begin in phases over the next 12 months.

- Step 1** Reorganize and consolidate the AZA and ZI functions as previously recommended. This could be done by immediately assigning one AZA to the Construction Service Counter and the remaining six AZA would assume supervision for two ZIs each.
- Step 2** Focus the next eight months, July - February, on 1) implementing a Case Management System and 2) training ZI staff to assume more case management responsibilities.
- Step 3** During the last three months (March-May) of the 1991-92 fiscal year develop yardsticks, assign teams, and plan for July 1, 1992 staffing reorganization. We anticipate, based on our analysis of the current caseload, that three AZA supervising 9 ZI will be sufficient to staff this function and ensure timely processing of the current caseload.

- Step4 Assign AZAs not needed in case processing to other departmental high priority activities. We particularly favor using the AZAs to strengthen the planning functions. A reallocation of roughly \$200,000 should be possible at this stage.

**208.** *Recommendation:* The Division should establish 45 days as the maximum time required to process applications. This standard, which is approximately one-half the Division's current level of service and one month less than that stipulated in the Municipal Code. This improved service level can be accomplished through increased staff productivity as discussed above and revising the current work process. As shown in Figure 34, it currently takes the Division three work weeks from receipt of application to assign cases and issue hearing notifications, another six work weeks for ZI to complete the research and return the file to the AZA for hearing; and another 30 days for the AZA to review the file, conduct the hearing, and issue the written letter of determination. Under the revised system, as shown in Figure 35, the AZA at the (Construction Service Counter) point of intake would assign the case and schedule the hearing within 24 hours of receipt. The contractor for issuing public notices would issue notification within 7 days, thereby enabling the AZA to conduct a hearing within 30 days from the date the application is filed. Based on the staff production discussed above, the case research should be completed, case heard and determination made well within the remaining 15 days of this recommended review cycle.

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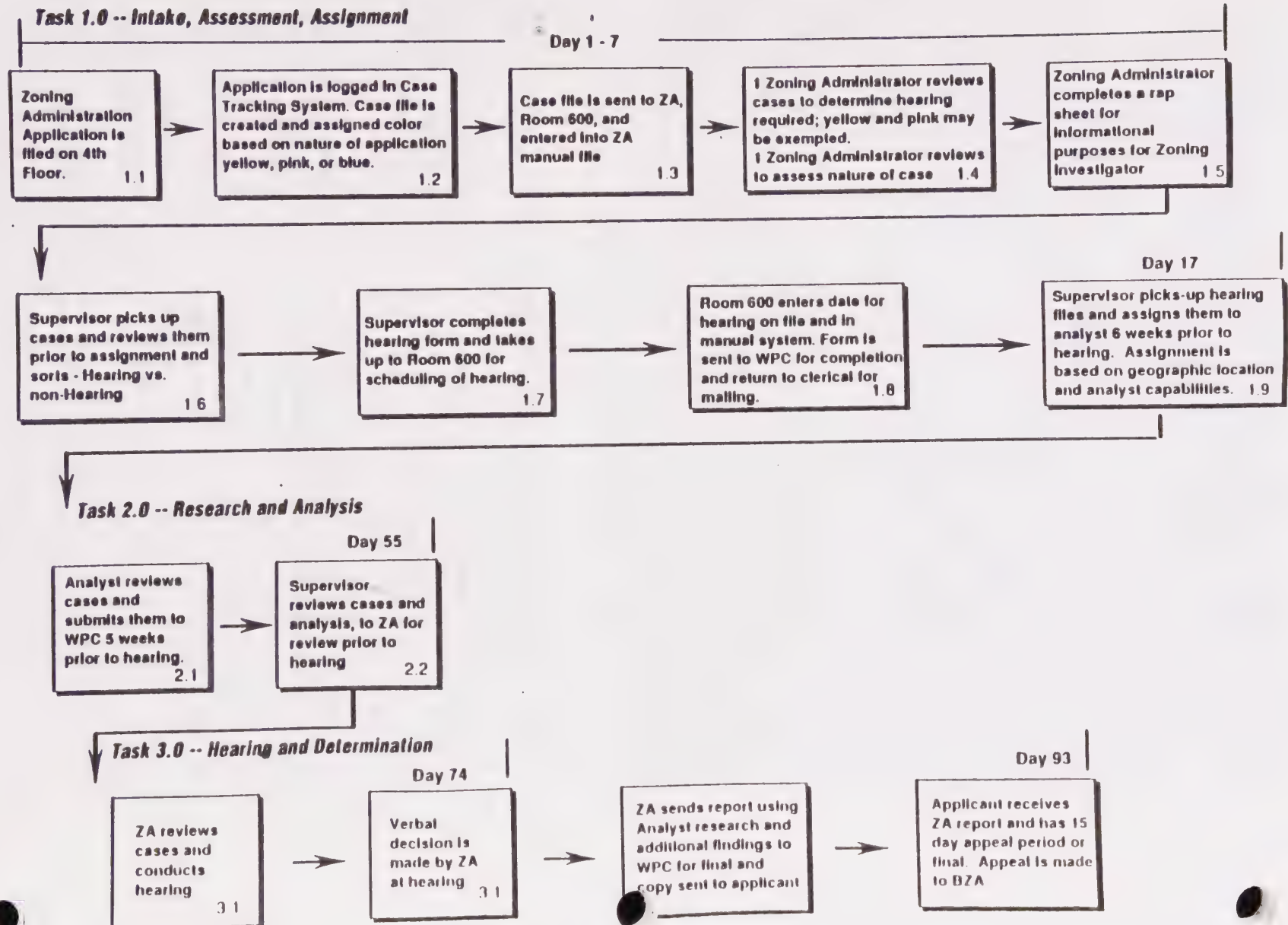
**Topic:** Associate Zoning Administrators - Work Method Policies and Procedures

**Background:** Currently, AZA are located on the 6th floor of City Hall. As discussed above, 41% of AZA work time is spent in non-case work activities. A significant amount of that time is spent dealing with public inquiries both on the telephone and walk-in at their non-public public counter. These interruptions impair the AZAs' ability to concentrate on their casework and complete their required tasks in a timely manner. Our on-site observations noted that AZA are for the most part manually writing out, in long hand, their additional reports and sending the material for typing to the WPC. This is a time consuming exercise that consumes the AZAs' valuable but limited time and further delays the timely processing of cases by requiring the involvement of WPC.

**209.** *Recommendation* The AZA should limit the unscheduled public walk-in contact to the Construction Service Counter. Moreover, telephone inquiries should be limited to 8-9 in the morning and 4-5 in the afternoon, thereby maximizing the amount of concentrated time available for AZA focus on a specific project. As discussed above, much of the text processing currently being done by AZA will be reassigned to the ZI. However, any additional text

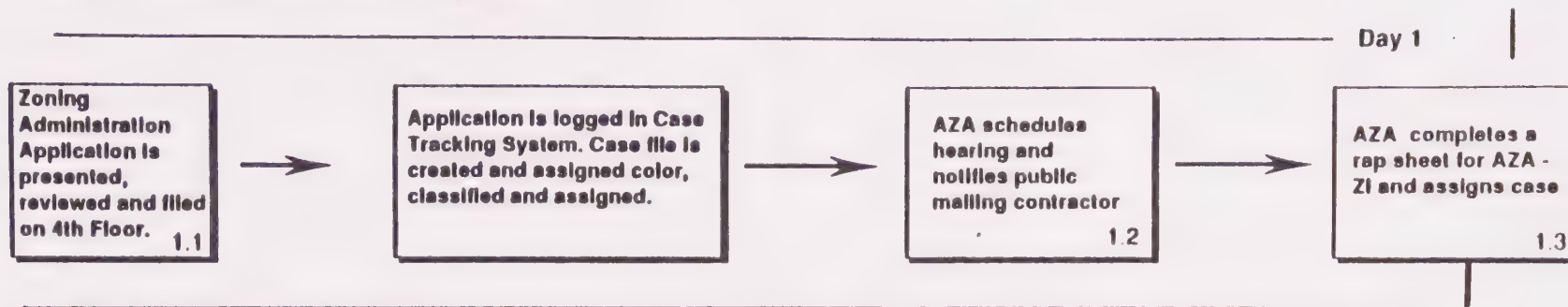


**Figure 34**  
**Office of Zoning Administrator –**  
**Current Case Processing**



**Figure 35**  
**Office of Zoning Administrator –**  
**Recommended Case Processing**

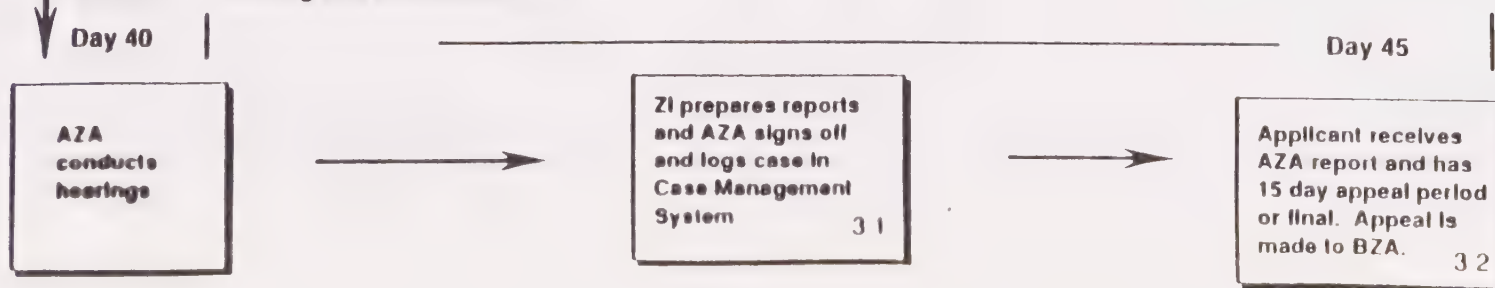
**Task 1.0 -- Intake, Assessment, Assignment**



**Task 2.0 -- Research and Analysis**



**Task 3.0 -- Hearing and Determination**





developed by AZA should be directly input, thereby eliminating the need to send documents to Central Word Processing. While initially this may retard the efficiency of the AZA, in the long run it will expedite not only their efficiency but that of the entire Department.

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**Topic: Code Studies and Research Analysis Unit (CSRA)**

**Background:** CSRA conducts studies and prepares ordinances changing Zoning, which action is carried by City Council and the Planning Commission, and processes ordinances relative to zoning and other City Code planning issues. Many of the research activities performed by the unit are similar in nature and impact to areas reviewed by the ZI.

**210. Recommendation and Implementation:** We recommend that this unit, which at one time was assigned to the Zoning Administrator's office, be reassigned to that office and placed under the direction of AZA. The transfer of this unit would provide an additional clerk typist to the ZA office clerical pool and five Planning Associates. The City Planner position, which was previously supervising this unit, could be transferred to other functions within the Department.

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**Topic: Clerical Staff - Utilization and Assignment**

**Background:** Currently, the Office of the Zoning Administrator has three clerical staff assigned to the Zoning Administrator's Office in Room 600 and one clerical staff member located in Room 509 to support the research and analysis function. In addition, two clerical staff members located in Room 513 provide support to the Secretary to the Board of Zoning Appeals. The Department's Central Word Processing Center provides typing support for the Division's research and case processing units. Our analysis indicates that Word Processing Documents for the ZA average approximately 4 pages a document and have 9 hour turnaround. This turnaround time and document length includes standard terms and conditions. In addition, the Division appears to be losing at least 2 days in transporting the various documents back and forth from CWP to the units. Four page documents represent relatively small documents and could be done more efficiently by a smaller typing pool located in Division's office. More important, our observations note that due to the limited clerical support for ZI, a significant amount of professional staff time is spent performing clerical functions answering phones, filing, and taking messages. As a result of having proper clerical support in the units, given the nature of the case work, all units experience peaks and valleys which cannot be easily addressed given the current organization and physical location of clerical staff.

**211.** *Recommendation:* We recommend that the clerical staff from all units, including BZA be reorganized and provided the technical word processing hardware essential to the delivery of those services. The clerical unit would be under the direction of a senior clerk and responsible for answering telephones, logging cases in the case tracking system, typing and mailing determinations for ZI and AZA, and handling all support functions for BZA cases.

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**Topic: Board of Zoning Appeals**

**Background:** Los Angeles Municipal Code specifies which AZA decisions are eligible for appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals. All appeals filed must be heard within a 75 day timeframe. As shown in Figure 37, our review noted the Division is currently providing a 55 day review cycle which is a superior level of service. The BZA meets weekly in the 5th Floor of City Hall Hearing Room to hear appeals. Currently, one City Planner and two clerical staff provide staff support to the BZA. This includes issuing notifications, collecting the appropriate documentation on the case for the Board and issuing the final decision. The AZA who initially heard the case and made the determination presents the Division's case before the Board.

As shown in Figure 36, the number of appeals of AZA decisions made to the Board of Zoning Appeals is 13% of the total cases, which is low. The relatively small number of appeals filed is reflective of the high quality of work provided by the AZA in making determinations that are correct and clearly defensible. It appears that the only category that has a high percentage of appeals are ZA determinations of Building and Safety decisions and Conditional Use variances. With respect to Building and Safety appeals, the larger number are to be expected given the fact that the ZA has already rendered a determination on the appeal from Building and Safety and the applicant wishes to persevere in seeking relief of the decision from yet another higher level of authority. These account for less than 10% of the AZA caseload. The other area is Conditional Use. In recent years the number of appeals from applications specifically dealing with conditional use permits for alcohol and adult entertainment has increased significantly. During the last year, 41% of the applications processed by the Zoning Administrator's Office were for Conditional Use permits. Moreover, Conditional Use applications accounted for 41% of the appeals heard by BZA and 80% of the AZA cases ultimately appealed to the City Council. The appeal process is labor intensive and it is a costly process for the city staff to prepare and defend the findings, while the appellant is required to pay a nominal fee of \$75.00. It is of interest to note that 90% of the appeals to City Council for condition uses reaffirm the BZA's prior decision.

The recent passage of the Charter amendment regarding City Council discretionary authority has raised questions throughout the City Government regarding the level of discretionary authority that can be



exercised by the Boards, Commissions and City Staff. Nowhere is that issue more relevant and timely than in the Zoning Administrator's office. Currently, the City Charter and Code are specific and clear regarding the role and responsibilities of the ZA, BZA, and City Council in the decision making and appeal process. Currently, only cases involving the granting of use variances are appealable to the Council. However, the number of appeals for these cases are increasing, particularly as the City Council continues to amend the City Code regarding the number of types of uses that require Conditional Use Variances.

**Figure 36**  
**1990 Zoning Administrator Appeals Caseload**

	Filed	Determinations	Appealed	Percent Appealed	Pending	Terminated, Dismissed, Withdrawn
Building & Safety	29	28	16	57	0	1
Adult Entertainment Phase Out	2	2	1	50	0	0
Communication	1	1	0	0	0	0
Com. Corr. Review	12	10	2	20	1	1
Conditional Use Booze	189	180	30	17	2	7
Cond. Use Booze/ Adult	5	5	1	50	0	0
Entertainment						
Conditional Use Adult	11	11	2	18	0	0
Entertainment						
Conditional Use - Zone	232	205	32	16	7	20
E	1	0	0	0	0	1
Over-in-Height Fence	55	52	3	6	0	3
Family Day Care	35	28	4	14	3	4
HS	2	2	1	50	0	0
Historical Vehicle Storage	3	3	0	0	0	0
Non-Conforming Use	2	2	0	0	0	0
Plan Approval (Zoning Variance & Conditional Use)	29	27	1	3	0	2
Project Permits	17	13	6	46	1	3
PP&CDP	2	2	0	0	0	0
PP&CDP&ZV	1	1	0	0	0	0
PP&ZV	2	2	1	50	0	0
Revocation	1	1	0	0	0	0
Slight Modification	240	210	10	4	25	4
Transitory Height	4	4	0	0	0	0
Yard Variance	353	307	28	9	27	19
YV&CUZ	2	1	0	0	1	0
Zoning Administrator Interpretation	44	38	4	11	4	2
Zone Variance	157	144	22	15	7	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>73</b>

**212. Recommendation:** The Board of Zoning Appeals should require the AZA to present the Division's response to the appeal and prepare the written report containing the BZA's decisions and related conditions. This is a reasonable expectation given the level of experience and professional

capabilities of the AZA and would not compromise the integrity of the appeal process. Should the applicant and/or the appellant disagree with AZA written report they could raise the issue with the BZA for clarification and/or modification if necessary. Streamlining the process and eliminating delays for document turnaround times would enable the Division to process appeals within a 45 day cycle. The transfer of those duties to the AZA is not significant and could be accomplished within their existing workload. Moreover, as shown in Figure 37 and 38, it would eliminate a two-week delay in the appeal review process that occurs while previously acted-upon cases are typed and returned for BZA review and approval prior to release.

**213.** *Recommendation:* The City Council should adopt by ordinance and therefore include in the Code terms and conditions that specify the guidelines for the granting of use variances. These guidelines will help clarify and empower the Zoning Administrator to make determinations that are defensible and do not require Council consideration unless specific criteria have been met. Unless this action is taken, it is probable that more and more use variance cases will be appealed to Council. If this is the desire and intent of the City Council, then it appears to be more efficient for both the applicant and the City in terms of time and money to remove the BZA from the appeal process and have ZA decisions in the matter appealed directly to the City Council.

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**Topic: Office Space**

*Background:* The Office of the Zoning Administrator is currently separated physically between the fifth and sixth floors. The physical separation impedes communication, work flow, supervision, and utilization of staff.

**214.** *Recommendation and Implementation:* We recommend the Division consolidate its clerical personnel and undertake a number of internal organization reassignments and realignments. Moreover, these reorganizations should be accommodated by locating the various units adjacent to one another. Our analysis indicates there is sufficient space to accommodate the current and recommended staffing configurations on the fifth floor.

A remodel of the existing office configuration to remove non-load-bearing walls and provide more public counter space would be desirable but not essential to implement the change. The co-location of personnel should by itself significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Division and facilitate the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations.



**Figure 37**  
**Board of Zoning Appeals –**  
**Current Case Processing**

**Task 1.0 Intake**

Zoning Administrator makes a determination

Applicant and/or protestant files an appeal within 15 days, depending upon statutory restrictions.

Board of Zoning Appeals Secretary interviews AZA to estimate hearing length.

BZA Secretary sets hearing and publishes notice 24 days, or usually 6 weeks, prior to hearing.

Zoning Administrator submits additional case comments

55 days

**Task 2.0 Case Research and Analysis****Task 3.0 Appeal Hearing**

Board of Zoning Appeals conducts hearings. Secretary prepares reports

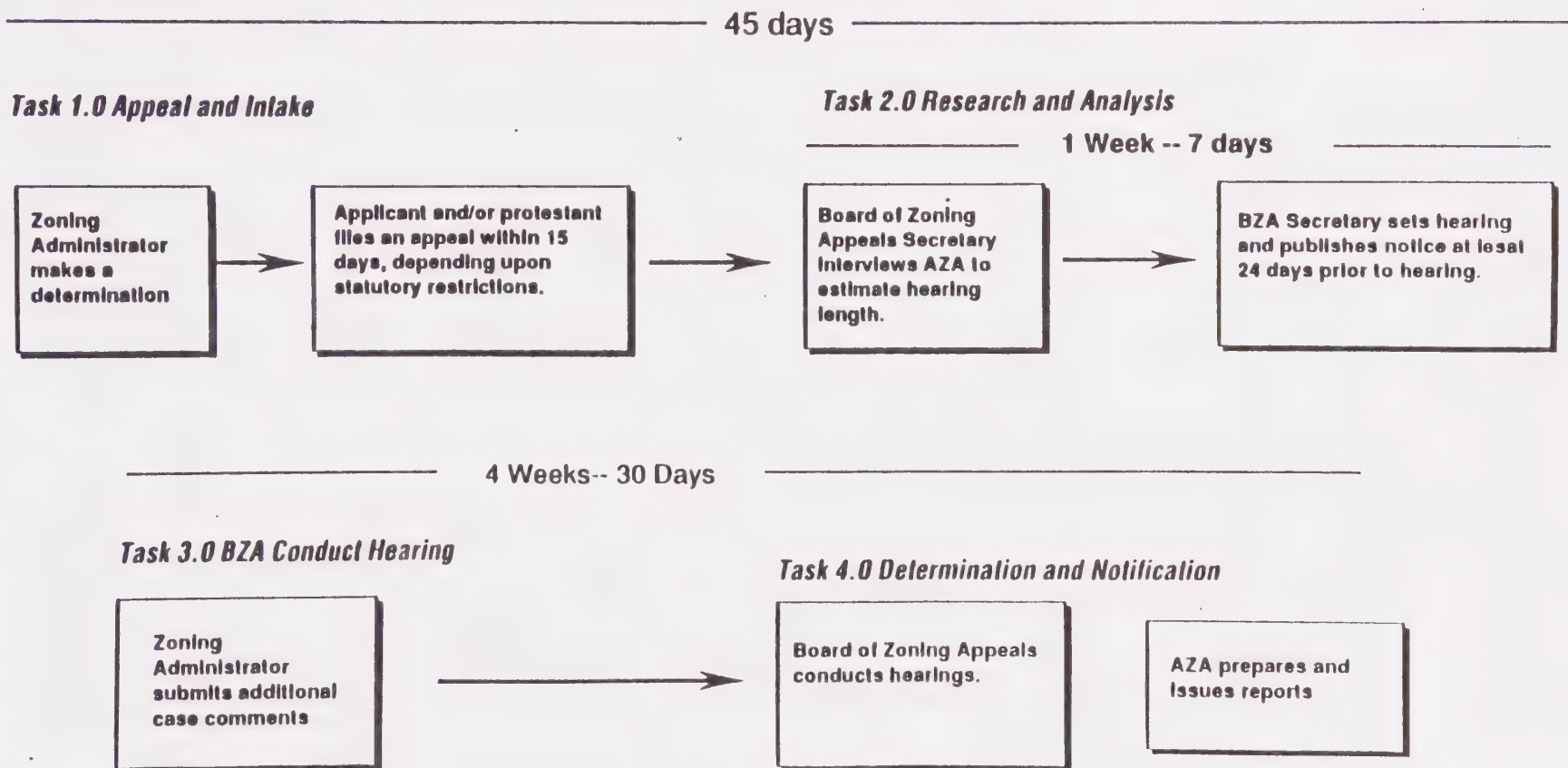
**Task 4.0 Determination and Notification**

Reports go to Word Processing Center. Reports returned to Secretary.

Board reviews reports and approves their release.

20 days

**Figure 38**  
**Board of Zoning Appeals –**  
**Recommended Case Processing**





**Topic: Counter 460S**

**Background:** This planning intake function is located on the fourth floor of City Hall in Room 460, Counter S, in the Construction Services Center. Planning also staffs a support function, cartography, at Counter R.

The functions at counter S include intake of applications, processing building clearances, and being a resource to the public. All the case types that are processed by Zoning Administration and Plan Implementation are accepted. The only types of applications not processed through 460S are those relating to parcel maps and subdivisions. These are separate intake functions located in Design and Development on the sixth floor.

The staffing profile at counter S is:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Number</u>
Senior City Planner	1
City Planner	4 (One of which is loaned)
Associate Planner	5
Assistant Planner	2
Planning Aide	1
Senior Clerk Typist	1
Clerk Typist	1
	14

The Senior Planner also has responsibility for the intake functions in the Van Nuys, San Pedro and West Los Angeles offices. All applications received in these field offices are routed to counter S for review before they are routed to the processing divisions. The staff works in cramped quarters with inadequate storage space and limited access to informational systems.

The historic volumes have been:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Volume</u>
1988	1,883
1989	1,861
1990	1,728

This represents an 8% decrease in case intake. No tally is kept of the number of public inquiries for information which is a substantial work load factor.

Counter S and R function within an organizational attempt to provide a one-stop service to the public. The one-stop concept was to facilitate the submittal and processing of applications and permits by integrating all the necessary resources into one location. The Construction Services Center, as implemented, is a collection of service counters staffed by representatives of departments with little or no integrating systems. Each counter is a reflection of its related department and, consequently, functions independently of every other counter. Lacking integration, the public must

still be served through multiple stations that are confusing to the uninitiated. By having most of them in Room 460, the distance traveled between them is reduced. This is typical of other one-stop service centers implemented in other agencies. While the City's implementation of one-stop service is an improvement over having those counter functions located back in the respective departments, it falls short of its potential.

The Peer Group, in its review of the Construction Center, observed that:

- The construction services center brings together in one location representatives of the various department that must approve development permits. It fails, however, in its basic mission to integrate, streamline, and make more comprehensible the development approval process of the City.
- The center should be made more user-friendly. A receptionist function is necessary where human beings can greet customers and direct them to the proper counter. The plethora of hand-made signs around the counter is evidence of the need for clients to have better direction on how to use its facilities.
- The center should have a single manager to coordinate the entire operation. Such a manager could be drawn from any one of the departments, such as the Building Department. The manager could integrate the entire permit system including an automated processing system.

#### **Topic: Signage and Instructions**

**Background:** Upon entering Room 460, there are a myriad of signs that appear haphazard. There is no directory. A map on the wall inside the entrance to the center shows counter locations. This sign differs from the map on top of a free standing pamphlet rack adjacent to the wall map. The pamphlets in the rack list the functions performed at each counter but do not inform the public how to get started, how to use the center, or how to have their needs met. The planning counter, Counter S, like others, has a number of hand-made signs taped to the wall.

Currently, the One-Stop Committee is having prepared new pamphlets to improve the explanation of the different counters and the processes performed at each.

**215. Recommendation:** Support the development of the new pamphlets being prepared at the direction of the One-Stop Committee. The draft literature is more explanatory and every opportunity to describe "how to" use the services of the counter should be exploited. Planning will need to further augment the new pamphlets for counter S with informational packages that are more specific and detailed. This packaging should



address the public's most frequent questions or needs. The objective is to free the staff from being the source to routinely needed information. Planning should prepare this package in a desktop publishing environment to be responsive to a dynamic and changing informational environment.

**216.** *Recommendation:* The pamphlet rack should be kept stocked. Regular inspections during the data-gathering phase documented the pamphlets for Counter S were missing from the rack. Responsibility for stocking and organizing the pamphlets needs to be assigned. Planning should check daily that its pamphlets are available to the public. If the rack for Counters R and S are not dependably stocked, then Planning should stock their respective pamphlets until the situation is corrected.

**217.** *Recommendation:* Planning should post an information board at its counters, R and S, to update clients regarding current procedures and/or processes. The Graphics section of Administrative Services should be used as a resource to design an information board and related handouts. The current proliferation of haphazard signs is confusing. Each sign stands alone rather than as part of an attractive, integrated set of user-friendly announcements.

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**Topic: Serving the Public at Counter S**

**Background:** As described earlier, the Construction Services Counter is a federation of independently run counter operations. There is no information kiosk where the public can ask a receptionist about their needs and how to use the center. Without any pro-active hand holding, the Construction Services Center is not user-friendly for the uninitiated.

Service begins at Counter S by the public reading a hand printed sign that tells them to take a number. They might also hear a number called and then, as observed, ask where to get a number. Repeat users appear to know from prior experience that pulling a number is required. When a planner is ready to serve another client, the sign displaying the number currently being served is noted and the next higher number is called. The planner continues to call ascending numbers until someone steps forward with a number. Periodically, the planner may fail to increment the sign displaying the number served which causes the same numbers to be called again.

As structured, this is a blind system. The ticket dispenser is on the opposite side of the column that holds the display sign. Consequently, the planner lack a quantification of the number of people waiting to be served. Rather, a visual estimation is made of the size of the waiting line.

Interviewing the public waiting to be served revealed that:

- People wait a short while and pull numbers that alternate with numbers pulled by other clients. They then leave counter S and conduct business at other counters or offices. They hope to return and not have all their numbers called. This is often done during lunch time.
- People take multiple, consecutive numbers as they want to control which planner will review their application.
- People wait until their numbers were called only to discover they were at the wrong counter.
- People are served sequentially without regard to the complexity of the services required. A messenger was observed to wait 45 minutes to pick-up documents left at the counter.

During these observations and interviews, the consultants pulled numbers to gauge the waiting time. This was done between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. Each waiting time exceeded 50 minutes and ranged as high as 75 minutes. This confirmed the comments by other planning staff about the waiting time at Counter S. During the course of this study, the senior planner in charge of the counter was promoted to an Associate Zoning Administrator position and a seasoned senior planner assumed the supervisory duties. Interviewing the newly appointed supervisor revealed that there was no historic data regarding waiting and service time at the counter. Nor are there any adopted customer service standards. The supervisor thought that a waiting period of 15 minutes would be acceptable.

As this is a key public interface, better data was needed. A sign-in log was developed and used by the staff for two weeks. During this time, clients pulled numbers, as before, and entered their name, time of arrival, and service required into the log. When their number was called, the time when service started was entered and finally, when service was completed, this time was entered. The log provided data as to waiting time, length of service, and total time (waiting time and service time combined) at the counter.

The log provided interesting data. The average waiting time was 17 minutes and the average service time was 11 minutes. Total average time at the counter was 28 minutes. There was a wide dispersion of data, or variance. The range of waiting time was from zero (0) to 150 minutes; service time ranged from zero (0) to 110 minutes; and total time ranged from zero (0) to 215 minutes. The average indicates, though, that most people waited a relatively short time. This was in direct contrast to the informal staff and consultant observations.

The following shed some light on the apparent differences. As the sign-in log was a new procedure, people had to be requested to sign in. When they indicated the service needed, the opportunity arose to handle clients immediately. For example, a person unfamiliar with the center came to Counter S to review his parcel's zoning. The planner referred the



client to Building and Safety's counter as they are the source of official zoning information. The interaction took less than a minute. The immediate reaction of the planner was, "that will lower our average." This exemplifies how a receptionist function performed at the beginning can differentiate requests for services to allow almost immediate service of simple requests. For these clients, an extended waiting period is avoided.

This initial screening also created the opportunity to educate the public. Individuals submitting complex applications were informed that they could schedule appointments for the intake screening and thereby, in the future, avoid waiting for service. This has been an existing service, but few applicants were aware of it.

Also, staff related that the supervisor would use the log to estimate the backlog of clients waiting for service. If the backlog was estimated to be excessive, the supervisor would make an immediate assessment of task priorities and used discretion to reallocate more staff to the counter. Putting more planners at the counter reduced the backlog of clients awaiting service. Once the backlog was reduced, certain staff would rotate back to their prior task assignments. By matching counter staffing to demands for service, the supervisor effectively controlled the waiting time computed from the logs. This control was not exercised in the study period prior to implementing a log.

The supervisor should be congratulated for exercising prudent management of customer service and her prerogative to reallocate staff to optimize service. Effective, responsive customer service requires continuous management of controllable resources, such as staff, to address the needs to uncontrollable events, such as the number of people arriving, that require services. Real time triage, the assessment of work load, priorities, and staff deployment, is part of the equation to providing effective customer service. Another element is the quantification of backlog, wait times, service times, etc. Here, the sign-in log provided a missing ingredient.

**218. Recommendation:** Planning should implement a sign-in log, similar to that used in this study, at all counter operations. This will replace the pulling of numbers by the public. The requested service entered by the client when signing in should be screened. Either a planner or a well trained administrative support person should assess:

- Whether the client is at the proper counter and redirect them as needed
- The complexity of requested service; perhaps, process the simplest requests immediately and have all others wait until a planner can work with them

- Whether the client is aware of existing services, such as appointments, that would facilitate submitting an application

A sign-in log also prevents game playing by the public in trying to control which planner will intake the application. This must be matched with consistency among the staff with regard to policy and procedures

**219.** *Recommendation:* Standards for customer service should be established. the supervisor's opinion is that the average wait time should be about fifteen minutes. This may be as good a goal as any other reasonable time; however, this standard, as well as other, should be buttressed with management consensus and support.

**220.** *Recommendation:* Use the sign-in log as a source of information to quantify customer service. This can be a source document for a number of statistics. For example, subtracting out the number of applications received results in the number of public inquiries. A workload factor not currently quantified. Performance needs to be monitored, reported, managed, and rewarded when appropriate.

**221.** *Recommendation:* Evaluate the circumstances surrounding any waiting or service period that deviates significantly from the established standard. Exceptions provide opportunities to further refine the counter operation to optimize customer service.

#### **Topic: Public Access to Information, Instructions, and Forms**

**Background:** Currently, there are no informational resources available to the public except for forms that the public could access themselves. The lack of user friendly processes and self-help information packages perpetuates a dependency that forces the public to deal directly with the staff. To file an application, the public must commonly begin by talking to a planner who will then provide the required forms.

There are over 140 different application forms in use. Some are used in conjunction with other forms. Not visible from counter S, but around the corner, are storage trays that hold 88 different forms. There is nothing that informs the public of this self-service resource nor would they find all the forms there anyway. Only experienced applicants can use this resources as there is no guide to instruct the uninitiated on the required collection of required forms.

In some instances, forms have been revised but the corresponding instructions and procedures were not. These uncoordinated changes diminish the utility of documentation that does exist and furthers the public's dependency to deal with the staff on routine and repetitive requests.



There was an effort to simplify and consolidate forms and instructions but the funding from the One-Stop Committee was insufficient to complete the effort. No changes were implemented.

**222. Recommendation:** Planning should proceed to develop user friendly information packages that facilitate the public's access to planning information, forms, and procedures. This would include a manual that through a decision tree approach allows the public to gather forms and instructions. The most common, straightforward requests should be documented first. For complex transactions, the option always exists to recommend that the applicant sign in and talk with a planner.

Being able to provide handouts or booklets is coupled with the concept of the sign-in log. This initial contact with a planner provides an opportunity to educate the public about available self-help resources.

Having the manual and instructions be multilingual would address the realities of the ethnic diversity of the public requesting services.

**223. Recommendation:** Consolidate and simplify the forms currently in use. The need for consolidation is acknowledged and it is unfortunate that the previous attempt ended short of implementation. Planning should proceed with revising the forms with or without funding from the One-Stop Committee.

**224. Recommendation:** Update all procedures and instructions to match the consolidation of forms. Whenever a form is updated, the instructions and procedures must also be updated.

**225. Recommendation:** Maintain all revised forms and instructions in a manual that documents the procedures for intake and processing.

**226. Recommendation:** Create accurate, up-to-date checklists to facilitate the intake function.

#### *Long Term*

**227. Recommendation:** A stand alone microcomputer should be used as an automated interface and clearinghouse for public access to planning information. Currently, the public must talk to a planner. The concept of an "expert system" is to computerize the analytical approach used by the planner to determine the specific needs of a client. Using a light pen or touch screen technology, the public would respond to a series of questions that would allow the system to determine if the request was simple enough

to inform the applicant of the matching forms, instructions and procedures. With a laser printer attached, the system could even print the documents as a package. This provides an environment for automated forms design and reproduction. Updating forms and instructions can be achieved in a more timely manner with assurance that the public is getting the most recent design. This would eliminate the traditional practice of offset printing large quantities of each form. This also would mitigate the current lack of space for storage and the destruction of obsolete forms.

With a "Help" function, the public could also inquire and be educated about available resources and services, some provided on a fee basis. Not only would this provide a more efficient and effective interface for the public but also would provide a forum to market potential revenue generating services and/or products offered currently or in the future.

Eventually, Planning could allow applicants to dial in to the system on a 900 number to get information and/or forms. For certain situations, an applicant does not even need to come to the counter and revenue is generated from the 900 line.

#### *Longer Term*

**228.** *Recommendation:* Augment the expert system with digitized voice instructions. Expand the system with terminals or stand alone systems in field offices. Integrate this concept into a case processing system. Allow remote inquiry as to the status of a case. All possibilities are too numerous to present, but perhaps the vision is clear. More possibilities emerge if Planning, Building and Safety, and Engineering are able to collaborate on complex systems like a parcel based, geographic information system and a permit processing system.

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#### **Topic: Completeness of Applications**

**Background:** The intake function at the counter is to screen the applications to determine if all requirements for submittal are satisfied. Functionally, after the submittal phase is a quality control phase where the application is reviewed in detail. If the application passes this test, then it is entered onto the Automated Case Tracking System (ACTS) and forwarded to either Zoning Administration or Plan Implementation Division.

Completeness and accuracy become issues as the discrepancies between forms, instructions and procedures causes confusion. The counter work space is not conducive to careful and thorough screening. Usually, private workrooms or conference rooms are needed. Also, in this environment, planners have accepted incomplete cases possibly in the spirit of customer service to reduce the applicant's frustration with the bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the acceptance of incomplete cases imposes an additional burden of holding files and requesting needed information.



**229.** *Recommendation:* Carefully screen each application at the intake function to minimize receipt of incomplete or inaccurate applications. Consolidating forms and updating all instructions, checklists, and procedures needs to be matched with rigid standards for accepting only applications that appear to be complete at the intake step. Certainly, later in the processing additional needs can be identified. All effective permit process operations utilize extensive screening procedures at the intake function to optimize the balance of the system.

**230.** *Recommendation:* Improve the work environment for screening complex cases. Standing at the counter or sitting a desk just behind the counter is not the proper environment. A conference room adjacent to counter R can be used if available. The scheduling of this room is not controlled by Planning. The benefits of having clients with complex application schedule appointments has already been discussed. Performing the intake function in a quiet environment has its obvious benefits. If such space controlled by Planning cannot be provided in the immediate area of counter S, then consideration should be given to scheduling the intake of complex cases in conference rooms constructed as part of the remodeling recommended in the space planning topic.

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**Topic: Work Space**

*Background:* The existing work space lacks adequate space to store the 1,862 maps used frequently by the staff. Many maps are stored around the corner at counter R. Boxes are stacked in walkways awaiting shipment to offsite storage. Preprinted forms are stacked on the floor as there is no better place to store them. Overall, the space is cluttered by a system that depends so heavily on physical documents yet provides inadequate storage space and filing systems.

**231.** *Recommendation:* If adequate space cannot be secured, then consideration should be given to moving the intake function of certain applications, possibly the more complex types, to other planning intake counter locations. This is consistent with better work space for the intake of complex applications.

Every attempt to reduce the volume of forms (forms consolidation) and to use other media for storage (microfilm copies of maps) should be studied. Planning should make the best use of existing space in concert with acquiring adequate space, either in room 460 or elsewhere, to perform professional work.

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## **Topic: Planners' Informational Resources**

**Background:** Planners function as an important source of information for the public and require extensive information to perform professionally. Overall, the lack of integrated, automated information systems and the dependence on physical documents, such as maps, ordinances, etc, diminishes their effectiveness and efficiency. Given the poor condition of the resources, the staff performs admirably in a direct public contact environment that can be frustrating and aggravating.

Examples of poor resources include, but are not limited to:

Missing maps as discussed in Systems and Mapping

Maps that do not include all needed information, height control districts for example

Exact boundaries of Interim Control Ordinances (ICO) and specific plans

Confusing ordinances

Obsolete instructions and procedures

No integrated information systems that summarize case history for a parcel or surrounding area

As presented before, little is packaged for the public's direct inquiry resulting in the planner being the integrating, explaining resource for the public.

**232. Recommendation:** Planning needs to provide better, more integrated and complete information resources to the counter staff. The challenge for a system so dependent on physical documents is to organize and improve what already exists. The next step is to study methods to automate the storage and retrieval of needed information. This must be part of the information systems strategy developed by the department. Counter operations have direct contact with the public and must contend with a broad spectrum of informational inquiries. This operation should have the best, most responsive information resources available.

**233. Recommendation:** Planners from the counter operations, or other implementing functions, should participate in the development and/or review of ordinances and other guidelines. The staff reported a direct, beneficial relationship when a planner familiar with the permitting process drafts an ordinance versus a planner not familiar. Having the processing background, a planner is better able to draft an ordinance that can be more easily interpreted in the real time counter environment. Witnessed during the fact finding was an instance where an existing



commercial business wanted to expand and the planner could not determine if the business was in an ICO area and if it was, would the expansion be allowed. Neighborhood Planning was contacted but an answer could not be given. Apologetically, the applicant was told to schedule an appointment with a planner who was not currently available in a building eight blocks away. With the proper information tools, a planner should be able to understand the situation and make the proper interpretations.

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**Topic: The Classification of the Supervisor**

**Background:** The classification of the supervisor is a senior city planner. By having the classification be an Associate Zoning Administrator (AZA), or the equivalent newly proposed classification of Chief Planner II, then determination of certain cases could be made at the counter without forwarding the case to Zoning Administration.

Slight Modifications would be such a candidate. These cases averaged 14% of Zoning Administration's total case load during a five year period, 1986 through 1990.

**234. Recommendation:** Have the classification of the supervisor such that decisions on defined cases types can be decided at the counter. Currently, the classification required is an AZA, but elsewhere we have recommended that this classification be replaced. Regardless of the future title, the supervisor should have the authority to make certain defined decisions. This will alleviate Zoning Administration of this work load and allow them to focus on more complex, substantive cases.

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**Topic: Counter S Staffing**

**Background:** As the service time data from the sign-in log indicated, the existing staff is capable of managing the waiting period to about 15 minutes (the actual average was 17 minutes). This was achieved in an environment that suffers numerous deficiencies as described above. This study cannot quantify the impact of each recommendation, however, the distinct possibility exists that when the improvements are implemented, the counter could function as well with fewer staff. The needed staff can be more accurately determined as the benefits from implementing the recommendations become more certain and defined. During the implementation phase, we are certain that even more improvements will become apparent.

**235. Recommendation:** Review the staffing at the counter as improvements are implemented and the benefits are quantified.

## X. SYSTEMS AND MAPPING DIVISION

### OVERVIEW

The Systems and Mapping Division is a service and support group to the Planning Department. They are an amalgamation of older, manual services merged with new technologies. The mission, by function, would be:

#### 1. Mapping

To provide cartographic services required to support departmental programs and services.

#### 2. GIS Services

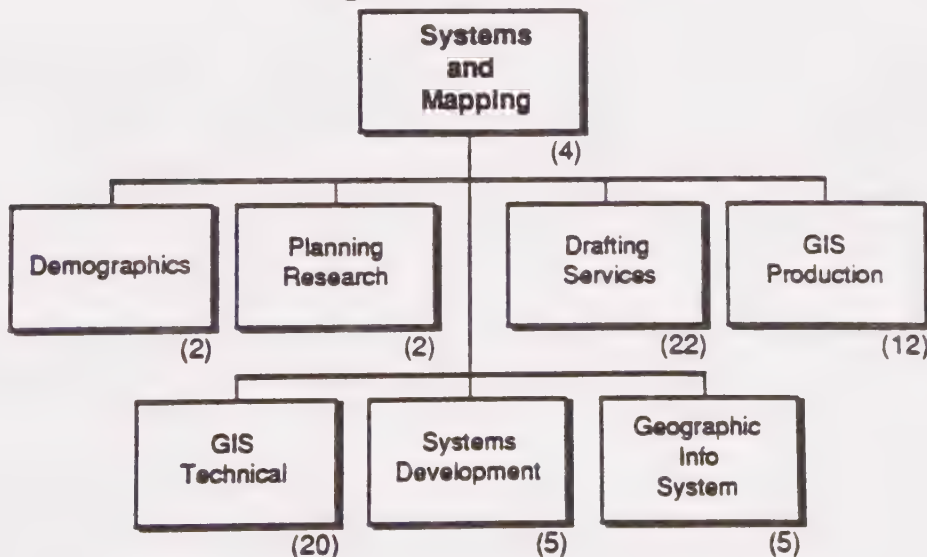
To develop, implement, and maintain a parcel-based, geographic information system capable of automating map production and of providing integrated information applications to support a broad spectrum of planning functions.

#### 3. Systems Development and Support

To develop and to maintain systems which support Planning's administrative needs (i.e., case tracking), and to complete research and demographic studies to support planning efforts primarily in the Citywide Division.

Shown below, in Figure 39, is the formal organization of Systems and Mapping that has seven sections employing 72 positions.

*Figure 39  
Organizational Chart*





The table below details the staffing, by classification, of the Division. It is assigned 72 positions.

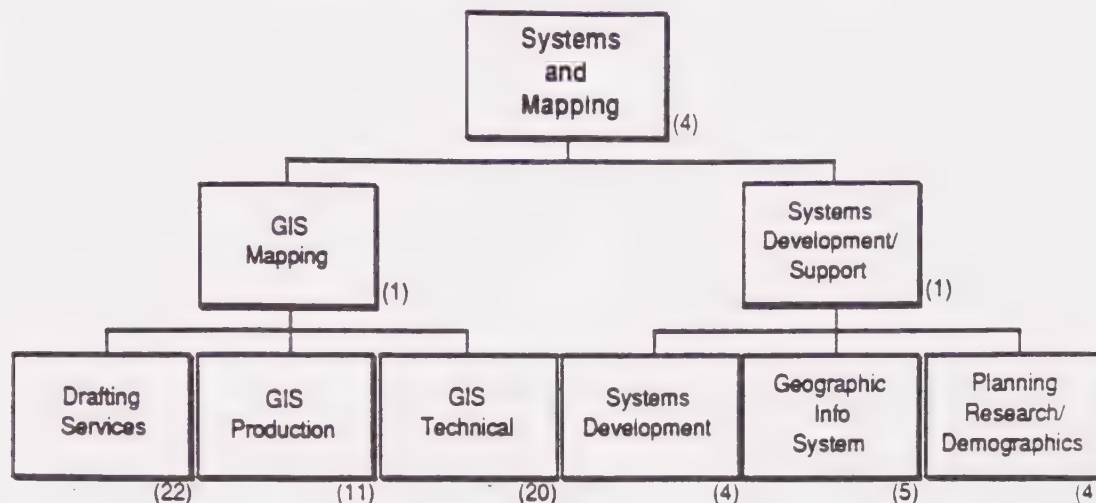
*Table 50*  
*Division Staffing*

	FY90-91	
	Auth	Actual
Senior Systems Specialist	1	1
Senior Clerk Typist	2	1
Clerk Typist	2	2
GIS Systems Supervisor II	2	2
GIS Systems Supervisor I	4	4
GIS Systems Specialist	19	14
O & S Research Analyst II	2	2
O & S Research Analyst I	2	0
Principal Cartographer	1	0
Senior Cartographer	3	3
Cartographer	11	11
Senior Systems Analyst II	1	1
Senior Systems Analyst I	2	2
Systems Analyst II	5	5
Systems Analyst I	1	1
Subtotal	58	49
Student Professional Worker	14	6
Total	72	55

Of the 72 authorized positions, 14 are student professional workers. These workers performed map preparation and validation tasks related to GIS parcel database automation and ancillary support activities. They research, perform field work and provide graphics support. Given the reduced activity in this function, the staffing level of the classification has declined from fourteen to six. The remaining 58 positions are full time professional or technical positions.

Since the inception of this study, the Division Head has resigned, increasing the vacant number of positions to 10. An ad hoc reorganization has occurred and as of February 13, 1991, the informal organization was structured as shown in Figure 40.

**Figure 40**  
**Informal Organizational Chart**



This ad hoc organization more accurately reflects the true reporting relationships. A description of each function as arrayed in Figure 40 follows. Detailed discussions of budgets, workloads, facilities, and systems are presented in subsequent sections.

### 1. Drafting Services

This function manually prepares reference maps for the public counters, provides cartographic services supporting City Council and Planning Commission requests, and performs map maintenance and certain administrative tasks related to cartography.

Efforts are being made to automate map making. A training program has begun. Currently, though, nearly all maps are prepared manually.

### 2. GIS Production

This unit has two functions. First, they draft the 'ordinance maps' that, once adopted by the City Council, legally define the zoning changes initiated by the AB283 project. The second function is to prepare the maps needed to publish updated community plans that reflect the zoning changes that resulted from the AB283 project.

To prepare the 'ordinance maps', extensive research was required as the boundaries of some zone type areas (R1,C1,R4, etc) have been historically ambiguous.

### 3. GIS Technical Section

This function is working to develop, implement, and maintain a parcel-based, geographic information system (GIS), a street centerline



transportation network, a city-wide environmental database, and integrated data access applications. This type of system combines graphic information used to prepare maps and tabular information. The data for a parcel would include, but would not be limited to:

Parcel Address	Census Tract/Block
Owner's Name	Council District
Owner's Address	Community Area
Parcel Size	Specific Plans
Zoning	Enterprise Zone
Land Use	CRA Area

As parcels are the smallest land unit, they can be combined as neighborhoods, communities, council districts, or census tracts to name a few possibilities. Currently, two communities have the graphical data prepared and are in final review. Three more communities are expected to be in final review this year. The funding for the development of a parcel based GIS has been tied to the Community Plan Revision (CPR) program.

#### **4. System Development**

This function has developed and continues to maintain and enhance Planning Department specific applications. One such application, Automated Case Tracking System (ACTS), runs on Information System Department's (ISD) mainframe computer. ISD is the centralized, data processing department providing computing resources and support to the Planning Department as well as all other City departments.

Other applications supported by this section run on computer systems located in the Planning Department.

#### **5. Geographic Information System**

This is the computer operations group that maintains and makes available the computer equipment located in and controlled by the Planning Department.

#### **6. Planning Research and Demographics**

This function performs sociological, economic, and demographic research and analysis primarily for the Citywide Planning Division. They also provide support to various planning research projects and to consultants requiring data pertinent to their specialization.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Topic: Zoning Consistency or AB283 Implementation**

**Background:** California state law requires that the zoning as shown on the zoning maps be in compliance with the text and maps of the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Indeed, the law requires that all the components of the General Plan be in compliance with each other and that each component has equal weight under the law. With regards to zoning, the laws were not always so specific. Cities in California were allowing development to be more intensive than allowed by their respective General Plans. The result led to communities having population concentrations that exceeded the planned projections. In 1970, State law was changed to require zoning to be in compliance with the General Plan. However, it was not clear that this applied to charter cities. In any case, the City of Los Angeles did not voluntarily bring its zoning into compliance with its General Plan. Assembly Bill 283 (AB283) made compliance between the General Plan and zoning an explicit requirement for the City of Los Angeles.

Left open was whether the General Plan could be changed to match the zoning or zoning changed to match the plan. Obviously, combinations of both actions were possible.

In the Planning Department from 1980 to 1985, a group of four or five people worked to study several community areas and recommended changes to zoning to achieve compliance in these areas. None of their recommendations were acted upon and no changes were made.

A lawsuit brought by a group of homeowners to cause the City to implement AB283 hastened the process. Because the homeowners prevailed, the City was served with a court order to perform.

In May, 1985, the staffing was increased to fifty (50) people and the project was given the title, General Planning Consistency Program. As the staffing grew to about seventy (70), the group evolved into a division. While formally the General Planning Consistency Division, they were commonly referred to as "AB283".

### **The process used to achieve zoning compliance:**

The initial effort was to identify the areas where zoning was inconsistent with the community plans. Where the text used "should", the zoning was left unchanged. When the text used "shall", the zoning was studied for consistency. Of 800,000 parcels in the City, about 300,000 were included in the program as inconsistent. Ultimately, most of these 300,000 parcels were rezoned to allow less intensive development (downzoning). Some were rezoned for different use and the rest were rezoned for more



intensive development, No effort was made to revise the text of the community plans. Given the urgency, the text was accepted as being relevant and valid.

Next, a criteria paper was written. This documented the principle criteria for decision-making: Make zoning consistent with the General Plan. Also, it documented the process of staff review, public workshops, public hearing, the adoption process, priorities, etc. This criteria paper was submitted to the City Planning Commission (CPC), City Council, the Court monitor, and the plaintiffs' for approval. Achieving consensus formalized the ground rules for the subsequent steps in the process.

The initial priority was on all parcels except where the land use was designated to be public facilities or open space. Parcels designated with these two latter land use types would be studied in subsequent cycles. While zoning exists for public facilities and open space, they have not been reviewed since the forties. The existing community plans indicate the land use for these areas but not the zoning. As the zoning consistency project was to take a fresh look at the zoning of all parcels, the existing zoning for public facilities and open space is subject to change.

The City Council allocated budget dollars not only for the increased staffing needs but also for consultants. Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) was retained to create computer-based maps to support the perceived need for intensive map generation, analysis, change and subsequent regeneration in an iterative analysis process. The existing manual cartographic capabilities were judged as inadequate to support mapping requirements of the zoning consistency project. The resulting maps were created through a technique called hand-digitizing. This employs a computerized approach that combines using a plotter to trace the outline of an area plus additional entries from a keyboard to provide additional graphic-related data. For example, the computer needs to know whether the line you are about to draw is a straight line or a curve.

The areas of the same zoning designation were outlined. Contiguous parcels zoned the same, such as R-1, would be contained within a single outline. As the maps included the street network, the maps give the impression that they are drawn at the block level meaning that the land, a "block", contained with the street grid, was defined graphically and included a zoning designation.

Actually, the contiguous parcels of the same zoning were outlined, sometimes these outlines were whole blocks, sub-blocks, even parcels. A single parcel zoned C-1 surrounded by R-4 zoned parcels would have its own outline. Consequently, the maps are neither parcel based nor block based. Technically, the graphic outlines are at the zoning area level or sub-area level of the entire map. The maps are graphical and the zoning

designations are text overlays. While computer based, there is no inquiry capability. These maps are strictly graphical and are not structured to permit processing at the parcel level.

With the consent of the State, the City was able to package existing Environmental Impact Reports (EIR's), where applicable, to support recommended zone changes. The City expected to need an additional eighty (80) EIR's and hired Michael Brandon Associates (MBA) to write them as needed. Ultimately, only four (4) were written.

During recommendation development, public workshops and public hearings were conducted together with extensive staff work. The emphasis was on zone changes. Text changes to the community plans were limited to those portions required for General Plan consistency and the respective zone changes. Overall, the text changes were considered "minimal."

Once the recommendations were developed, they were processed through the approval cycle. Unique to this, the recommendations adopted by resolution by the City Council were conceptual and were not technically ordinances. As development of ordinance was time-consuming, this was left as a follow-up task as the recommendations were subject to change during the approval process. By City Council motion, though, adoption of the recommendations had the effect of an ordinance and took precedence over subsequent development permits.

The approval cycle required that, first, the recommendations for text and zoning map changes were presented to CPC. Once approved by CPC, the plan portion (text and its related land use map) went to the Mayor's office, who had thirty (30) days for approval. The zoning map went to the Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) committee. PLUM would combine the plan portion approved by the Mayor and the zoning map. This became a complete package for a plan amendment to be considered and, subsequently, approved by the City Council.

The City Council adopted the plan amendment recommendations by resolution. As follow-up, then, the ordinance map was developed, which is a text description of the sub-area maps developed by ESRI. The boundaries were defined by referring to the property lines of parcels on the perimeter of the area being described. This complex, technical document was accompanied by a map, referred to as the Hearing Notice Map which served as a visual aid to interpret and to understand the map ordinance. Once adopted, the ordinance replaced the recommendations which had heretofore served as a quasi-ordinance.

The task of identifying the parcels zoned inconsistently with the Plan, rezoning (typically downzoning), and developing recommendations by adoption by resolution of the City Council was a very complex, difficult task. Having the Court concur that compliance was achieved validated the quality of work. Achieving compliance represent a major accomplishment



for the Planning Department and the City. In a relatively short period of time, mid-1985 to 1989, much was completed despite the often criticized City structure and external legislative requirements, such as EIR's.

Having the Court agree that compliance was achieved, however, did not mean that the work was complete. The recommendations had to be converted into ordinances and community plans had to be updated, both the text and the related land use map. Also, the zoning of parcels designated as public facilities and open space remain to be studied. Here, the project has had problems and became stalled. The division that was formed to focus on zoning compliance began to have its staff reallocated and ultimately, in 1990, the division was disbanded with the remaining staff assigned to three different divisions.

While no longer a solidified project team under a single manager, the resources were to function in a decentralized, project management mode. The resources in each of these three divisions were to maintain, as a priority, their continuing efforts to complete the related staff work. Thirty-five community plans were to be published in three years. However, time allocations eroded; priorities changed; and, effective coordination of intra-departmental resources ceased. In FY1989-90, twelve community plans were updated and published. For these twelve communities, the zoning ordinance was adopted; the text and map of the community plans were updated and consistent with each other; and, all these documents were available to the public as required by State law. By March of the fiscal year 1990-91, only one additional revised community plan had been published. After nearly two years, thirteen community plans have been published with twenty-two still unpublished (In June, 1991, another community plan was printed, but not yet available for the public. Consequently, at the time this report was written, twenty-two community plans were still unavailable to the public) This serves as a testimonial that the focus was lost on completing the zoning consistency effort.

The Systems and Mapping Division has been working to complete the ordinance maps. Completing the ordinance map for the last community plan area is anticipated by the end of 1991. Another group within the same division is working to complete the land use map that is part of the community plan. Because the adoption of the ordinance maps has continued to proceed, they were able to develop the land use maps based upon these ordinance maps. While only thirteen community plans have been published, maps for twelve more have been waiting for completion of the other two components of a community plan: the text portion of the plan and the artwork/typesetting for the covers.

The planner resources were reassigned to the Neighborhood Planning Division. When interviewed, the planners believed that all text changes could be completed by two planners in sixty to ninety days if their time could be focused on only these tasks and they had the administrative support to word process the text information.

The artwork and typesetting of the covers comes from the Graphics section of the Administrative Services Division. Each community plan has had an original cover designed and an extensive list of credits that identify the individuals who contributed to the development of the plan. With the slow production of plans and the changes in staff, some who have left the City, developing an accurate list of credits has become more difficult.

An overarching concern is that the City is in violation of State law by not having current community plans available to the public. Citizens cannot purchase a copy of the current plan nor land use map for twenty-two community plan areas. Nor are these documents available to policy makers, staff or the City Attorney's office.

For these twenty-two communities, the final ordinance map should begin the approval cycle by the end of 1991. This leaves only the publishing of the updated community plans to be accomplished.

Twelve of the twenty-two have the maps for the community plans completed. The remaining ten are scheduled to be completed by the end of calendar year 1991.

The last two ingredients are the text and covers. These have lagged the ordinance and map development. All twenty-two require planner and graphics support.

**236. *Recommendation:*** For ordinance maps, reaffirm the priority and the expected completion of all ordinances by December 31, 1991. Coordinate with the participants to develop deadlines for review. Develop a schedule for approval by each review authority through and including the City Council.

**237. *Recommendation:*** For the land use maps portion of the Community Plans, review the current schedule for completion of maps for all communities including the printing volume and delivery date of the maps to the city. Reaffirm the current priorities to complete all by December 31, 1991.

**238. *Recommendation:*** The revision of the text portion of the community plans appears to be the major bottleneck in the entire process. The text changes have always been considered "minimal" and the planners estimates of sixty to ninety days to complete all text changes would support this.

The administrative support to enter the text from the existing community plans should be identified and allocated. Whether using



resources internal to Neighborhood Planning, or Administrative Services, Word Processing, or using contract services, the text information needs to be entered into a word processor.

Parallel to this, the planner resources need to be identified. Their highest priority would be to provide administrative support for the revisions and/or new text information required. Their workload and priorities need to provide for completion of this task for all community plans within 90 to 120 days. Much longer and the Department may begin to diffuse its focus and diminish its concentration on task completion.

**239.** *Recommendation:* Use the City's standard for word processing, WordPerfect, and enter the text for all thirty-six community plan areas. This will facilitate planner review and modification of community plans during future studies.

**240.** *Recommendation:* Public Facilities and Open Space The priorities need to be established for the completion of Public Facilities and Open Space. Resources commensurate with the priorities need to be assigned. If a project management style organization is utilized to achieve project completion, then the executive management needs to review regularly the project's progress and take corrective action as needed. If the resources are organized as a special task force, then the task force manager should report regularly to the executive management regarding progress and the corrective actions being taken.

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#### **Topic: Cadastral Maps - Manual Preparation**

*Background:* The Planning Department has needs for various maps. One type used at the public counters (460S, Van Nuys, West Los Angeles, San Pedro) has been the District Maps. There are 1,862 District Maps that cover the entire City and they show each parcel that exists. The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) provides the source map called a base map. Currently, the raw base map coming from BOE must have planning text information, such as zoning, added to it before it can be used at the public counter. This information is added manually. The opportunities for long term automation are discussed under the topic, Cadastral Maps - Automation. The following discussion focuses on the manual processes and the opportunity for immediate and short term methods improvements.

The maps that are in service at the public counters have case numbers written onto them following case numbering of applications at the intake function.

The City is currently converting from District Maps to a new format called Cadastral Maps. District Maps varied in the area they covered, but

most mapped about one mile north to south and one and a half miles east to west. The boundaries were determined by the street network. As streets run in different directions, the top of the map was not always north. District Maps are like jigsaw puzzle pieces that when put together mapped the City.

The new format adopted by BOE places more rigid standards, or controls, on base maps. Cadastral Maps introduced coordinate controls and the top of the map always points north. These maps are like uniform building blocks, much like the grid system on a Thomas Guide map. Not only did the format change, which alone prevents one for one replacement of District Maps but also BOE is changing the scale from 1 inch equals 100 feet to 1 inch equals 50 feet.

The process of converting from District Maps to Cadastral Maps has been lengthy. The cartographers have been working for four years to replace 1,862 District Maps and are about 50% complete and this does not include the impact of the scale change. The cartographers begin with a base map supplied by Engineering. The cartographers would "leroy" the Planning Department text information onto the original. The text included the zoning designations and other information, such as the height limit imposed by ordinance. Also hand lettered are the case numbers per parcel that have been filed and recorded on the District Map being replaced. For the Planning Department, the recording of case numbers on the maps has been their only physical "database" of case history at parcel level. The hand lettering of the information onto the new Cadastral Maps before they are put into service represents a significant investment. The data indicates that about 32 hours are invested into lettering per map.

After the text information has been entered, the color code corresponding to each zone type is applied. The color coding is estimated to require about a half-hour per map.

After one original is made, the cartographers proceed to make a second original using the same process as described above. BOE supplies two originals of the base maps and all the hand lettering is done twice. The two original, color coded maps are then distributed. The cartographers do not retain an original.

Before maps are put into service, they are reviewed for accuracy. About seventy maps are awaiting the review process. No new maps have been put into service since October, 1990, as none have been inspected.

**241. Recommendation:** Stop making two originals of the Cadastral Maps and save \$826,122. System and Mapping should request that BOE supply one original of the base map. Once the planning information has been applied, use replicating equipment already existing in the department



to make two copies. If completion of the project took another four years, the average annual savings would be \$206,530.

The conversion process requires about 32 hours per map or 64 hours when two originals are made. Making one original represents a savings of 32 hours per map. As only one original would be inspected for accuracy, the time savings will be even greater.

As the conversion process is about 50% complete, this leaves about 931 maps to put into service. Saving 32 hours per map represents saving 29,792 hours, or 16.9 man-years (29,792 hours / 1,760 available hours per year). The annual mid-point salary for a cartographer will be \$35,681 in July, 1991. Multiplying the man-years times the annual salary with its fringe benefit rate of 37% equates into a savings of \$826,122 during the remainder of the conversion program. This saving requires no investment. All replicating equipment is already owned by the City.

**242.** *Recommendation:* Stop leroying information onto the base maps and save \$413,061. Building and Safety uses stamps to indicate the zoning type. These are stamps that print, for example, R-1, R-2, R-4, etc. This eliminates leroying. Building and Safety can prepare a map in about sixteen hours. Reviewing the microfilm copies of Building and Safety's maps, the stamps provide a clear and readable indication of the zoning. The cartography section already owns a duplicate set of these stamps. The cartographers should stop leroying and begin using the stamps to imprint the same information.

Opportunities to automate application of other text information should be examined. Using the services of the Graphic's section of Administrative Services to produce reoccurring text, such as the limitation of building heights, would allow the staff to paste on the information, much like a commercial artist would prepare a paste-up. As an alternative, the staff suggested that stamps could be prepared that would imprint the standard text. Whether pasting on information or stamping it on, the elimination of leroying alone will reduce the time investment from 32 hours to 16 hours using Building and Safety's benchmark for an average map.

The recommendation above computed the savings of 32 hours per map. Saving another 16 hours per map would represent half that amount or \$413,061 for the remainder of the conversion project by using stamps already owned by the Department. If completion of the project took another four years, the average annual savings would be \$103,265.

The two recommendations to simplify the manual processes represent a combined savings of \$1,236,183 for the projected balance of the current conversion program at an average annual savings of \$309,045 if another four years were required. Making no other changes should permit

the staff to put maps into service using one-fourth the time (16 hours versus 64 hours). If four years were needed to complete 50% of the maps, one year should be needed to complete the other 50%.

The savings become even larger when the impact of the scale change by BOE is considered. The present total of 1,862 maps would become about 5,000 as some maps are already on the new scale. About 4,100 new maps would have to be put into service. Saving 48 hours per map (eliminating leroying and making one original) represents a potential savings of \$5,466,000.

**243.** *Recommendation:* The cartography section should keep the original of the map that has the planning information applied. If a distributed copy should ever need to be replaced or another copy made, the original stored in the cartography section would be available for replicating. This eliminates requesting a base map from BOE and re-applying information.

**244.** *Recommendation:* Eliminate the color coding. Use different line designators to differentiate between zone types. The use of reproducible designators allows the preparation of an original that is complete and copies that need no further additions. The designators to indicate a change in zone type can be patterned lines as the examples below illustrate.



**245.** *Recommendation:* The cartography section should request a full set of original base maps from BOE and keep these on file. This "library" becomes a reference source if any base maps that were in service need to be replaced or if other uses for the base map should become evident.

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**Topic:** Security of Maps at Counter 460S

**Background:** Security of the maps at the public counter 460S is lax to non-existent. Private map makers have been personally witnessed during the course of this study to go behind the counter, pull maps, and make copies on City copiers without paying. The story is told of a woman who took a map home and returned it only when the City threatened a lawsuit. If a map is not to be found, the case number transactions for the missing map are recorded separately with the anticipation that if ever located, the case numbers assigned to related parcels on the map will be entered. Such recording after the fact has not always occurred.



If a map becomes lost, the history of the case numbers recorded on the map is lost. No effort is made to recreate the history as no cost effective method exists to retrieve the data.

In August, 1989, an inventory was taken of the maps at the public counter 460S. Of 1,862 maps, 130 maps were missing. BOE estimates that each base map is worth about \$10,000. The longer the map is in service, the more valuable it becomes. Older maps are estimated to be worth \$30,000. Given that the history of a lost map is operationally irreplaceable, \$30,000 may be low. For the 130 maps that were missing, if the average value were \$20,000, this loss represents a loss equal to \$2,600,000.

Interestingly, no request was generated to replace the missing maps.

**246. Recommendation:** Eliminate unauthorized use of the maps. Only authorized personnel should be able to pull a map from the storage locations. Ownership of these valuable resources needs to be assigned. The supervisor of the counter operation should have the authority to designate personnel who are authorized to pull maps and identify those who cannot.

**247. Recommendation:** The process for requesting and paying for copies of maps should be enforced.

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**Topic: Inventory of Maps at the Counter**

**Background:** The inventory technique for maps adds to confusion. There are pigeon holes behind the counter that hold both District Maps not yet replaced and the newer Cadastral Maps. Each pigeon hole has been numbered in anticipation of the Cadastral Maps. However, there is no indication if a map is not yet in service. An open pigeon hole can indicate that the map is in use, borrowed, missing, or not yet put into service by the cartographers. There is no out card used if a map is removed from the immediate counter area. These deficiencies prevent a quick inventory to determine if all maps are present or identifying those that are missing.

**248. Recommendation:** An inventory needs to be taken of all the maps that should be in service currently. Those locations where maps are missing need to be identified and replacement maps requested. Those storage locations, pigeon holes, that exist but where the map is not yet in service should be identified and labeled.

**249. Recommendation:** Control the inventory of maps in service. Individuals who want to borrow a map should receive authorization from

the supervisor, or designee, and as part of the request, they should be required to prepare an out card.

All maps should be returned to their storage location at the end of each day. At the close of each day, the supervisor, or designee, should take a quick visual inventory. Labels indicating that certain maps are not yet in service or out cards should account for all empty storage locations. An immediate search should be initiated for any unaccounted for maps. No effective control of the maps will occur until Planning begins to act as though the maps are important and effective controls are implemented and enforced.

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#### **Topic: Recording Case Numbers Onto Maps**

**Background:** After a case is accepted at the counter, its case number is entered onto the appropriate Cadastral or District Map currently in service. The maps are used as a physical database for recording case transaction history at the parcel level.

From our inspection of the maps in service, older maps become worn out and the case numbers are sometimes barely legible. Maps can become damaged and or get lost. If a map becomes lost, the history of the case numbers recorded on the maps is lost. No effort is made to recreate the history as no cost effective method exists to retrieve it. The two maps of the same area also become out of synchronization with each other. For ten years, the Department has not sent a cartographer to record the case number activity on the maps at the San Pedro and West Los Angeles field offices. Consequently, the maps at City Hall and these field offices are out of synchronization. Cartographers have also been known to transpose case numbers. In short, the City uses the maps as a physical database to record case transactions and these documents suffer all the problems associated with physical files.

The City already has in use a computer database that could track case transactions at the parcel level. Each case that is accepted is entered onto the Automated Case Tracking System (ACTS). The department does not require a unique identifier to be entered with each case. A unique identifier could be the county assessor's parcel number (APN) which uses map book, page, and parcel number to uniquely identify all parcels. The City uses a different numbering system organized as tract, block, and parcel number (TBP). Each system can also assign a suffix to these numbers and the suffix is called an arbitrary number (ARB). Using either or both would provide substantial utility to the City. The importance of unique identifiers, often called "keys" by database designers, cannot be minimized. Effective use of any production database requires the careful design, use, and enforcement of keys.



The City requires that the applicant supply the APN and the TBP but the City does not always enter the data into ACTS. As a consequence, case transaction history at the parcel level can not be effectively, reliably, and efficiently found and summarized by ACTS.

This prevents the planning staff from using ACTS as a source of case transaction history and perpetuates the dependency of the case processing functions to post case numbers onto maps. As described above, case numbers are not always entered and sometimes mistakes are made on maps that can get damaged, lost, or worn out.

Consider that since 1989, at least 130 maps have been missing from 460S and therefore, the case numbers could not have been recorded onto them.

**250. Recommendation:** Use ACTS to track current case transaction history by requiring that the APN and TBP are entered for each and every case. All cases regardless of intake location must be entered into ACTS. This must be mandatory. The system should be modified to make these required fields, meaning that data entry cannot proceed until these fields are entered. Planning has an excellent control point, the data entry function, to make this occur reliably. If a map becomes lost, the history captured on ACTS is still intact.

**251. Recommendation:** Eliminate posting case numbers to maps. As presented, there are many deficiencies with posting case numbers to maps. They make poor physical databases to record this information. If a map is lost, the history recorded on it is not reconstructed. By implementing the recommendation above, the need to record case numbers onto maps would be eliminated. If ever a parcel based, geographic information system is placed into production, a machine to machine transfer of the case history data would be possible.

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#### **Topic: Microfilming Maps**

**Background:** 460S does not have adequate space in its immediate area to store 1,862 maps. Storage locations at 460 are also used. Building and Safety microfilms their maps and uses viewers to refer to maps.

The change in scale by BOE will cause the number of maps to increase to nearly 5,000. Currently, there is inadequate space for the 1,862 maps. The counter cannot accommodate 5,000 maps in the current format and storage technique.

**252.** *Recommendation:* Use microfilm copies of maps as Building and Safety does instead of the physical map. This approach would eliminate the storage problem and enhance inventory control. The staff at the counter will need quality viewers/copiers when the conversion occurs. In the past, the One Stop Committee has been a source of funding to purchase equipment.

Eliminating the posting of case numbers onto maps also facilitates cost effective use of microfilm as a map only needs to be refilmed when the configuration of the map is changed. Text data regarding case transactions would now be on the system.

#### Longer Term

**253.** *Recommendation:* Maps should be purchased from Mapping rather than at Counter 460S. Mapping would have a reference library of maps and the equipment for replicating them in a controlled area. The work area behind Counter 460S needs to be closed to the public. Effective control will never be established as long as an 'open door' policy exists. Inventory and financial control would also be improved. This recommendation is linked to other proposed changes to maps that would eliminate the counter as a source of maps for map makers.

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#### Topic: Radius Maps

*Background:* The cartography section prepares the required radius maps for cases that are initiated as a result of City Planning Commission or City Council motion. The cartographers begin the process by taking a blank sheet of tracing paper and tracing a District or Cadastral Map. They carefully ink in all the lines. After tracing, they then leroy text information, such as zoning and case numbers, onto the radius map. Field work is required to determine the land use for each parcel.

**254.** *Recommendation:* Eliminate tracing and leroying of text information. The cartography section should have a master copy of each base map. As a part of a previous recommendation, this section would begin to maintain an original for each Cadastral Map. The remaining base maps should be requested from BOE. To prepare a radius map, a cartographer should pull the appropriate master copy and make a copy of it. Then, from the copy just made, the cartographer should cut out the area required for the radius map. The radius map can then be prepared much like a commercial artist would prepare a paste-up. As the radius map has an established format, a form can be prepared onto which the paste-up is made. When the paste-up is completed, it would be reproduced in sufficient copies and on the appropriate paper/vellum. The copies from the paste-up would be distributed.



Currently, forty hours are invested to prepare the radius map. This does not include the field work. Reducing the manual tasks would save an estimated thirty-two hours per map. With a current volume of forty-five radius maps per year, this saves 1,440 hours annually, or \$39,995 per year.

If the current equipment damages the paste-up due to excessive heat, alternative means or equipment should be investigated. The labor savings alone would justify alternative methods.

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#### **Topic: Official Zoning Maps**

**Background:** The official zoning map of the City is a 400 scale map. This means that one inch equals 400 feet. This is still another map maintained by the cartographic section. The other 400 scale maps are the zoning inconsistency maps and the community plan maps. As part of the AB283 project, a database was created by ESRI to provide maps. The database prepared the zoning inconsistency maps. These maps should be identical to the official zoning maps. But they are not. The official zoning maps are not current. For example, the both the official zoning map and the zoning inconsistency map numbered "492" map the same area. Yet the zoning designation is different for certain parcels. The official zoning map does not have the up-to-date zoning designation on it. Also, the AB283 database is not being fully maintained. Changes to zoning occur and these changes are not reliably entered. As a consequence, there is no reliable document or database that documents the City's official zoning for all parcels in a current fashion.

**255. Recommendation:** Through an ordinance change, make the official zoning map of the City the Cadastral Maps (or the District Map if not yet replaced). The Planning Department needs to have one database or map that services multiple needs. Currently, trying to maintain a number of different types through manually process is unsuccessful and breaks down. Having the cadastral maps as the official document eliminates the need to maintain other maps which is not occurring anyway. Now the maintenance efforts can be focused on one type of map.

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#### **Topic: Integrity of the AB283 Database**

**Background:** From the AB283 project, a computer database was developed that can prepare maps of the City. It is a graphic database and is not a parcel based GIS. This system is regularly used to prepare presentation maps for a number of purposes and for various divisions. This system is needed to prepare the maps for community plans. As changes to zoning are not reliably entered the database is degrading. At

one time, this system was the most accurate resource for zoning information as it was used intensively during the AB283 project. Due to poor maintenance, however, it is not as accurate.

**256.** *Recommendation:* Maintain the AB283 database until another database, such as a GIS, is prepared to replace it. Maintaining the integrity of the data in the AB283 database enhances the opportunity to transfer accurate information in a cost effective manner to a GIS. Also, it is needed to maintain the accuracy of the current community plans.

This will require that System and Mapping be notified of all changes in land use and zoning. This informational loop will also be required to maintain the accuracy of the Cadastral Maps.

Also, as a fall back, if the ordinance cannot be changed regarding the official zoning maps, then an up-to-date AB283 database could prepare official zoning maps that are accurate and current.

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**Topic: Cadastral Maps - Automation**

**Background:** The definition of Cadastral Maps, their origin, and usage are described in the topic, Cadastral Maps - Manual Preparation. The following presents the current environment and opportunities for automating Cadastral Map preparation. The ultimate, long term solution for automated map preparation would be a geographic information system (GIS) which is presented in the topic, Geographic Information System.

By July 1, 1991, The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) will complete the process of computerizing their base maps into a system called ComputerVision. This system is similar to a computer aided design (CAD) system. The data is a graphical database and does not allow processing or inquiry at the parcel level. ComputerVision is used to draw maps and is not a parcel based geographic information system.

The system is designed to draw maps and apply text overlays. The system can draw a map that depicts all the parcels with a given area in the proper configuration, size and location. By overlaying text data, BOE can then produce a completed map that serves their needs. The capability exists to create a Planning Department text overlay which would include the pertinent zoning and other data currently manually entered onto Cadastral Maps. The creation of such an overlay would allow BOE's system to draw a Cadastral Map complete with Planning information. Such a map would be ready for replication and would eliminate the manual cartographer tasks currently performed and those simplified manual tasks recommended to be performed.

BOE has indicated that several cartographers supplied by Planning could be trained on the ComputerVision system and using BOE



workstations, could create the necessary overlays. The maps would be produced upon request and requests would be satisfied within the production constraints of BOE. These ComputerVision generated maps would be the most cost effective approach for a process still dependent upon a physical map.

BOE has indicated that, while not funded, the next phase of automation is to create a parcel based GIS using the ComputerVision data as a starting point. With a GIS, the reliance on a physical map is eliminated and map information can be viewed on computer screens.

**257. Recommendation:** Planning should meet with BOE to define an implementation program to automate the production of Cadastral Maps with the needed planning text information. Planning should contact BOE to initiate the implementation plan. Cartographers for this assignment should be identified from the Systems and Mapping Division and loaned to BOE, as needed.

An additional benefit is having one source for Cadastral Maps. This supports having the Cadastral Maps as the official zoning maps. Those departments needing Cadastral Maps could also investigate having text overlays appropriate to their needs created. This would eliminate other duplicate cartographic processes that occur elsewhere.

Trained staff in BOE could develop an initial text overlay for the purposes of creating a benchmark or time standard to be used to estimate completion of the project. Due dates and expectations for the staff should be quantified and communicated. The supervisor of the mapping function in Systems and Mapping should regularly update executive management on the progress of the automation process.

This is a longer term solution to the creation and maintenance of maps. The recommended short term improvements to the manual cartographic process should be implemented.

**258. Recommendation:** Reevaluate the classifications, staffing profile, training needs and career ladders of the related cartographer positions as the timing and benefits of improvement through automation become more certain and quantifiable. This is a potential source for reallocating resources as fewer positions would be needed when productivity improvements are implemented.

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**Topic: Maps at the Parcel and Subdivision Counters**

**Background:** Maps at the parcel and subdivision counters are very old. It appears that they last received maps in 1977. Some are literally falling apart. The case numbers recorded on them are wearing off.

These maps are one inch to 800 hundred feet.

BOE is preparing to publish a Thomas Guide type of map book that will cover the entire City. The maps will be one inch to three hundred feet printed on nearly indestructible paper that is approximately legal size. These maps will have more information on them than the maps currently in use at these counters. If the planning text data is added to BOE's database, then these maps would be a valuable reference book for at least these two counters.

**259. Recommendation:** Request adequate copies of these books to replace the maps currently in service at these counter.

Having ACTS track case history would eliminate posting of the case information to these new maps which then will extend their useful longevity.

These map books would also be an effective reference document if the counter operations convert to microfilm copies of the maps.

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**Topic: All Maps Currently in Use and Those Required by Planning**

**Background:** Completely automating the production of maps is a long term recommendation. This study identified sizable savings by improving the existing map making processes. Left unchallenged were basic assumptions, such as the scale of maps used at the counter and of radius maps.

**260. Recommendation:** A study should be conducted to examine the assumptions regarding all maps in use, who uses them, the appropriate scale, etc. As the City will continue to rely on physical maps until they are truly automated, all possible aspects of maps and map making needs to be research so that all the possible savings can be realized.

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**Topic: Information Systems Planning**

**Background:** The Planning Department's approach to information systems has been piecemeal and fragmented. This is supported by the Peer Group's observations. Systems should be developed to fit into a larger, strategic approach for using information systems to simplify and to



improve the work in both the planning and permitting functions. As conceived in this report, systems should release the staff from performing manual, repetitive tasks or should summarize data heretofore not available or impossible to report. The current offering of systems are scattered with little or no integration. As a result, the staff labors in an environment nearly devoid of integrated information tools and with a strong dependence on physical, case files.

The peer group comments were as follows:

"The amount of data and paper requiring processing demands computerization. All routine processes should be automated. If you (the City) are going to streamline processing, computerization should eliminate duplication and reduce time for processing."

There is little interdepartmental cooperation for systems development and integration. Each department seems to be pursuing its own agenda with little regard for City-wide efficiency. During interviews with the Information System Department (ISD), the City's centralized data processing organization, they represented that Planning, Building and Safety, and Engineering have traditionally been three departments that have acted independently in their systems development. The development of systems continues to be mostly independent from ISD and from each other. ISD has sponsored a coordinating effort regarding GIS that is referred to as Geographic Information Management System (GIMS) that has succeeded in establishing certain standards that will allow the departmentally developed GIS to interface with each other. But the overall theme of applications development by these three departments continue to be independent.

Planning's approach for funding of application systems, such as a parcel based, geographic information system (GIS), has been tied to other programs. With GIS, it was tied to the Community Revision Program (CPR) which now has suffered a significant decrease in funding. In the section on the Citywide division, we are recommending that CPR be given a two year hiatus so that the General Plan can be updated. Tying funding of GIS to CPR can be considered a critical flaw. The cost benefits to Planning, indeed the whole City, of a GIS would be considerable. GIS should either stand alone on its own merits for budget justification, or nothing should be spent. Also, the development of major applications should not be allowed to continue with the current independent, department level approach. Duplication of effort is occurring in multiple departments.

The GIS currently under development in Planning provides only a part of what the department needs. A truly effective GIS would be accessible by all the functions in Planning, other departments, and the public. The current hardware configuration starves the development of GIS and would provide limited access of limited portions of the City at any one time. The funding for computer equipment, that was subsequently frozen, to support the development of GIS would have been too little to allow

1. What do you see as the major strengths of the City Planning Department?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you see as the major weaknesses of the City Planning Department?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you feel can be done to eliminate the weaknesses listed above? (Please be specific.)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# APPENDIX A

## LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Division Name \_\_\_\_\_ Section Name \_\_\_\_\_

The following questionnaire is an important and essential part of the analysis of the Los Angeles Planning Department, being conducted by Zucker Systems. The study is aimed at improving both effectiveness and efficiency. Your ideas and thoughts are central to the process. This questionnaire will supplement other work being undertaken by the consultants.

Please complete this questionnaire and return it in a sealed envelope to Blanca Perez in the Planning Directors office by a week from today. Take your time in answering the questions and be as complete as possible. When appropriate, you are encouraged to include attachments or examples.

Your comments may be merged with others and included in our report; however, the consultants will not identify individuals with relation to specific comments. Your responses and comments will be held in strict confidence.

We will contact some staff for follow on interviews. If you have any specific thoughts you would like to share with the consultants in a personal interview, please let us know directly or leave a message with Blanca. I can be reached at (619) 457-0277.  
Thank you for your help.

Paul C. Zucker

Attachment

**267.** *Recommendation:* Consistent with other recommendations regarding Citywide employment of additional technical resources, the Citywide division should have these positions transferred to it. Improved organizational effectiveness will be achieved by having these resources who work extensively on Citywide projects reporting directly to these project managers.



**264.** *Recommendation:* Complete the development of the GIS database only for those community plans already started. The existing system could be used to develop requirements and a prototype of a fully implemented GIS. The development of requirements for a collaborative effort with Engineering is needed to begin the feasibility study to determine the cost to Planning for the enhancements to the anticipated GIS that BOE is developing. A prototype system would be of great value to test alternative designs and to develop a testing methodology.

**265.** *Recommendation:* Conduct a feasibility study to determine the incremental costs for BOE's GIS to support planning.

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**Topic: Implementing Technology in Planning**

*Background:* The efforts to implement those improvement that are possible are hampered by dependence on other functions, such as General Services, and the construction of City Hall itself. At the time of City Hall's construction, no one knew of today's need to link automated information processes. Currently, configuring systems and connecting a network of users require computer rooms and conduit. General Services provides the construction services and these services have not been responsive to the needs of the Department. Currently, a more effective grouping of staff and equipment cannot be accomplished as the facility improvements requested last year have not been made.

**266.** *Recommendation:* Planning should seek to implement those technologies, such as PC based, local area networks, that can be done independently. A successful strategy seems to be the configuration of equipment, systems, and work stations that do not necessarily require substantial facilities improvements, such as installation of conduit. If such improvements cannot be completed on a timely basis where the Department reaps the immediate and/or short term benefits of technology investments then alternative approaches need to be considered.

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**Topic: Statistical and Demographic Research**

*Background:* The two positions that provide this expertise are about 75% dedicated to supporting projects in the Citywide division. The systems used by these staff members are transportable and not integrated with other systems within Systems and Mapping.

**Planning.** The Peer Group observed that *establishing a parcel based GIS is an essential tool for the planning process.*

Building and Safety has been pursuing development of a permitting system. This may not be exactly the type of processing system envisioned by this study. However, it is another interdepartmental opportunity to develop a common system to address the needs to two departments that interrelate frequently in the permitting process.

Not all applications or automation opportunities possess interdepartmental utility. Those that only Planning wants would be the candidates for intra-departmental development. The development of these should draw upon the resources of all divisions to avoid the isolated development of applications that lack user involvement and ownership.

Planning needs to proactively seek dependable sources of funding so that the staff can proceed with confidence. Application development efforts need to culminate in the implementation and maintenance of systems that have management support and user ownership. The perception that nothing gets completed needs to be replaced with a positive, "can do" attitude.

The assistance of a consultant at an estimated cost of \$25,000 is recommended for this item.

**262. Recommendation:** The Systems portion of Systems and Mapping needs to move to the forefront of information planning for the Department. Developing needed automation, coordinating with other departments to have mutually usable systems, identifying new opportunities for implementable systems speaks of a dynamic, progressive systems development effort. Significant involvement in interdepartmental tasks forces to develop GIS and a permit processing system will require technical expertise in diversity and in staffing quantities.

With the recommendation to stop further development of a GIS and the potential for automating the mapmaking process through collaborative effort with BOE, other, substantive, funded projects need to emerge or the function will shrink to a point that its existence will be threatened. For a department that would benefit significantly from the application of technology, embracing a proactive information strategy is a necessity.

**263. Recommendation:** Consistent with the organizational changes recommended for Administrative services, the division head position should be eliminated and the sections, Mapping, Systems, and GIS should report directly to the Deputy Director position. The saving by eliminating this layer would be \$80,000 per year.



department-wide access to valuable information. The storage capacity was also inadequate to allow the information on all parcels to be available in a real time mode.

Another major system is the Automated Case Tracking System (ACTS). This was developed by staff in the department, but no one outside of Systems and Mapping seems to take ownership from an operational perspective. From charting the work flow of cases, ACTS appears to be used and viewed as strictly overhead. Some work areas do not reliably input cases nor their status and no one seems to care. ACTS could replace a number of logs and other physical files that existed before its implementation but it did not. ACTS did not provide a labor savings by replacing older manual systems. The Department now maintains a computerized status, location system in parallel to these manual systems. ACTS is not a case processing system. With such a system, cases can only be processed by using the system and cannot be processed independently from the system. For example, determination letters would be written in the system. This not only facilitates the writing of them but also now the text of the letter is contained in the system for access by others. The value of a case processing system is that it automates the business of permitting and frees the staff from dependence on physical files.

The utility of a case processing system is enhanced when it can interact with a GIS. The permitting process can begin with Planning and then move to Building and Safety with input from Engineering and other departments. This reality strongly suggests that application development needs to expand from a departmental approach to an interdepartmental task force where the requirements of various departments can be met in a more cost effective manner.

The lack of an integrated information strategy and long term, dependable funding has resulted in the staff believing that the City lacks the fundamental commitment needed to bring complex, multi-year projects to fruition. Resources initially dedicated to a program are drained away and progress slows. Conflicts also arise with consultants about the pricing of their work because the amount of work is reduced and spread over a longer period of time. Frequently referenced are the experiences of AB283, GIS, and Transportation modeling.

**261. Recommendation:** Planning needs to articulate its information systems strategy. With a plan, then the critical elements to be developed intra-departmentally and inter-departmentally need to be identified and sources of funding examined. The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) with funding from the Bureau of Sanitation appears to be proceeding towards the development of a GIS. However, as Planning has not been a part of the current effort, their requirements are surely not in BOE's work plan. This would be a key opportunity to collaborate with BOE for a GIS that would truly meet the needs of the permitting and planning functions within

41. Have you been cross-trained in other areas? If yes, please identify.

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42. In what other areas would you like to be cross-trained?

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43. Would you like more training? If so, in what areas or topics?

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44. What functions are you currently handling manually that you believe could or should be automated? (Please be specific.)

A 

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B 

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C 

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37. **Non-graphics staff only.** Are you satisfied with your graphics support? If not, how do you suggest it be improved?

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38. **Administration staff only.** Does the non-administration staff provide you with all you need to complete a job? What can they do to make your job easier?

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39. **Non-administration staff only.** Are you satisfied with the administration staff support? If not, how do you suggest it be improved?

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40. Have you received sufficient training for your responsibilities? If not, please comment.

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33. What kind of problems occur between sections or divisions in relation to carrying out your functions?

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34. **For clerical staff only.** Does the non-clerical staff provide you with all you need to complete a job? What can they do to make your job easier?

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35. **Non-clerical staff only.** Are you satisfied with your clerical support? If not, how do you suggest it be improved?

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36. **Graphics staff only.** Does the non-graphic staff provide you with all you need to complete a job? What can they do to make your job easier?

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29. What would you recommend to solve the problem identified in question 28?

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30. What would help to shorten or speed up the processing of development applications if you think that it should be shortened or sped up?

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31. What would help to shorten or speed up the development of general plan elements, community plans or specific plans if you think that they should be shortened or sped up?

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32. Do you have any suggestions for improving internal communications in the Department?

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25. Is there enough communication and feedback between you and your supervisor? If not, how could communication be improved?

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26. Do you have specific objectives or expectations that have been written down for your position in addition to the official job descriptions? If yes, please provide a copy or list below.

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27. Please list the three most important objectives or expectations for your job, as you understand them.

A. 

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B. 

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C. 

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28. Are there any problems in providing services to the public? Please list them.

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21. What does your supervisor do to help you with your job?

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22. Identify four to five things your supervisor does that hinders you from doing your job.

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23. What changes would you recommend to correct this?

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24. What additional things could your supervisor do to help you do your job?

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16. What would you recommend to correct these problems?

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17. Are you responsible for keeping any records or files? If so, describe briefly below.

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18. What problems, if any, do you experience with department records? (Please be specific.)

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19. Who is your immediate supervisor? Please list name and title.

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20. Who, if any, reports directly to you? Please list the names and titles.

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12. What suggestions would you make in order to perform your specific duties more effectively and efficiently?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What kind of problems occur between other city departments and planning that impacts your work?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

14. What changes would you recommend to solve these problems?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

15. What problems do you see in relation to the Planning Commission or City Council?

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

8. How would you describe the goals or mission of your division?

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9. Do you have any written policies or procedures that guide your work? If so, please list them.

A. 

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B. 

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C. 

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10. Are department policies and procedures distributed and discussed with you? If so, by whom?

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11. Do you have any "pet peeves" about policies or procedures you would like to share? If so, do you have any specific suggestions?

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4. What programs, activities or jobs would you eliminate or reduce in the Department and why?

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5. What important services or programs have been cut from the Department or are not being pursued due to budget or other considerations that you feel should be added?

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6. Do you feel any of the City's ordinances, policies or plans in relation to the planning function should be changed? If so, list them and explain why.

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7. How would you describe the goals or mission of the Planning Department?

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45. What functions that are currently computer-automated need improvement? List your suggested improvements.

A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
C \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

46. What problems do you have with telecommunication systems?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

47. What do you suggest to correct the problem?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

48. What additional equipment, furniture or space do you need, or would be desirable, in order to improve your efficiency and effectiveness? (Please be specific.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



49. Do you feel any of the Department's functions could be effectively contracted out? If yes, list and explain why. If no, explain why.

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50. What problems are there in the Department's contracting functions?

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51. What should be done to correct these problems?

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52. Do you favor the department's use of the 9/80 and 4/80 work schedule?

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53. What problems do these schedules present?

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54. What do you suggest be done to solve the problems?

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55. Do you believe the Department should be decentralized? If yes, why & how? If no, why?

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56. Do you recommend any change in the way the department is organized? If so, what changes do you recommend?

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- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Division Name \_\_\_\_\_ Section Name \_\_\_\_\_

Note the organization in the questions means the Planning Department.

In the boxes below, enter the appropriate number for each statement according to this guide.

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. When problems are identified, we move quickly to solve them.                            | [ ] |
| 2. We have an effective process for listening to citizen or client concerns.               | [ ] |
| 3. We do a lot of new things in this organization.   | [ ] |
| 4. The concern for employees in this organization is more than lip service.                | [ ] |
| 5. This organization is willing to experiment and try things out.                          | [ ] |
| 6. Good service is the rule rather than the exception in this organization.                | [ ] |
| 7. Managers in this organization foster new ideas advanced by employees.                   | [ ] |
| 8. We have a strong emphasis on training.  | [ ] |
| 9. This organization seeks to identify problems quickly.                                   | [ ] |
| 10. Managers in this organization have frequent, direct contact with citizens and clients. | [ ] |
| 11. Employees in this organization have the organizational freedom to originate new ideas. | [ ] |



LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

12. Management discuss objectives, programs and results with employees regularly. [ ]
13. There is free and open communication among all levels of employees about the work they are performing. [ ]
14. Our employees treat citizens with respect. [ ]
15. This organization encourages practical risk-taking and supports good efforts. [ ]
16. This organization has incentives besides money for all employees to do well. [ ]
17. Our actions and policies are premised on a sound set of beliefs. [ ]
18. This organization has a clear sense of what its programs are trying to accomplish. [ ]
19. Managers in this organization have a lot of leeway in directing day-to-day operations. [ ]
20. This organization's values are clear and well understood by employees. [ ]
21. The things we do, we do very well. [ ]
22. This is not a rigid, rule-oriented organization. [ ]
23. We have a stable political environment even though we have experienced changes in programs and resources. [ ]
24. Leadership in this organization focuses on more than survival. [ ]
25. This organization is characterized by firm, central direction on key issues. [ ]
26. There is effective two-way communication between the organization and its outside environment. [ ]
27. Managers instill excitement throughout this organization. [ ]
28. This organization is not overextended in terms of the types of programs it provides. [ ]

LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

29. Support staffs in this organization are minimal. [ ]
30. Elected officials, boards, commissions and department staff work effectively together. [ ]
31. I am satisfied with the type of leadership I have been receiving from my supervisor. [ ]
32. I have good opportunities for advancement in this organization. [ ]
33. I have enough time to do my work as it needs to be done. [ ]
34. I am kept abreast of changes that affect me.
35. We have excellent land use policies. [ ]
36. We have excellent development processing procedures. [ ]
37. Permit processes in our organization is not unnecessarily complex nor burdensome on the applicant. [ ]
38. Permit review is undertaken in a consistent manner. [ ]
39. Permits are reviewed in a timely manner. [ ]
40. It should be the primary policy of the Department and its employees to assist any applicant in making out his/her application, seeing that it is complete as soon as possible, and processing it without undue delay. [ ]
41. It should be the policy of the Department to make the permit process as pleasant and expeditious as possible. [ ]
42. It should be the policy of the Department to simplify the Codes under which the Department operates to the maximum possible extent, consistent with the goals of the City and the laws of the State. [ ]
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**APPENDIX B**  
**AVERAGE RESPONSES TO PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
**QUESTIONNAIRES**

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
Department-Wide

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	297	290	297	294	297	297	295	298	298
Average Response	3.2	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.8	3.2	2.7	2.8
Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	291	296	298	296	293	294	296	289	295
Average Response	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.3	4.6	3.1	2.8	3.2	3.1
Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	291	299	294	294	288	293	291	285	295
Average Response	4.	2.7	4.3	4.	3.2	3.4	2.9	3.1	2.6
Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	283	291	287	294	296	296	249	272	274
Average Response	3.3	4.7	3.	4.4	3.8	4.3	4.1	3.4	3.2
Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42			
Number of Responses	275	271	273	286	287	286			
Average Response	2.7	3.5	3.2	5.1	5.7	6.			



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
Neighborhood Planning Division

Responses to survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Average Response	3.4	3.3	2.9	3	2.8	3.2	3	2.3	2.5

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Average Response	4	3.1	3.6	3.3	4.6	2.8	2.3	2.5	2.7

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Average Response	4.1	2.3	3.7	3	2.8	3	2.6	2.8	2.3

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	43	43	43	43	43	43	38	41	42
Average Response	2.8	4.8	3	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.6	3	2.8

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	42	42	42	43	43	43
Average Response	2.3	3.3	3	5.1	5.5	5.8

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
Systems & Mapping Division

Responses to survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	39	38	39	37	39	39	39	39	39
Average Response	3.5	3.7	3.4	3.9	3.6	4.2	3.5	3.4	3.4

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	37	39	39	39	39	39	39	36	39
Average Response	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6	5	3.4	2.8	3.5	3.1

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	38	39	38	38	37	38	37	38	37
Average Response	4	2.9	4.7	4.4	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.5	2.8

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	37	39	36	39	39	39	32	35	34
Average Response	3.7	4.4	2.8	4.3	3.1	4.8	4.6	3.7	3.4

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	34	33	33	36	36	35
Average Response	3.2	3.8	3.2	5.6	5.9	5.9



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
Development & Design Division

Responses to survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Average Response	2.8	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.4	2.4	1.9	2.3

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	30	29	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Average Response	3.3	3.1	3	2.8	4.1	2.6	2.5	3	3.1

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	30	30	30	30	30	30	29	29	30
Average Response	4.2	2.6	4	3.3	3.2	3.3	2.3	2.6	2.1

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	29	30	30	29	30	30	26	30	29
Average Response	3	4.5	2.3	4.2	3.8	3.6	3.2	3.2	2.9

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	29	29	30	29	30	30
Average Response	2.5	3.1	2.6	5.3	5.4	5.7

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
Zoning Administration Division

Responses to survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	35	35	34	35	35	35	35	35	35
Average Response	2.5	3.6	2.5	3	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.6	2.3

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Average Response	3.7	3.2	3	2.9	4.1	2.8	2.5	3.3	2.9

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Average Response	3.8	2.4	3.7	4.1	3.2	3.4	2.8	2.9	2.1

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	34	35	35	35	35	35	31	32	34
Average Response	2.8	4.9	3	4.6	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.3	3.4

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	35	34	34	35	35	35
Average Response	2.2	3.2	2.7	5	5.8	6.2



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
City-Wide Division

Responses to survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	53	54	54	53	53	54	53	53	54
Average Response	3.4	3.9	3.8	4.1	3.8	4.3	3.8	3	3.1

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	54	54	53	54	54	54	54	54	54
Average Response	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.7	5	3.2	2.7	3.6	3.3

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Average Response	3.9	3	4.6	4.4	2.6	3.4	3	2.9	3

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	54	54	54	54	54	54	47	54	53
Average Response	3.3	4.4	2.7	4.9	4.2	4.7	4.5	3.3	3.2

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	53	53	53	54	53	54
Average Response	2.6	3.6	3.1	4.8	5.7	6.2

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
Plan Implementation Division

Responses to survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	40	40	40	40	40	40	39	40	40
Average Response	3.3	4	3.7	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.2	2.5	2.9

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	40	40	40	40	39	40	40	40	40
Average Response	3.7	3.5	3	3.4	4.2	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.2

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	39	40	40	39	39	39	39	39	40
Average Response	4	2.8	4.5	4.2	3.2	3.2	2.6	3.5	2.7

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	39	39	40	39	40	40	30	38	38
Average Response	3.1	4.8	3.6	4.8	4.1	3.8	4.2	3.4	3.2

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	39	38	39	39	40	40
Average Response	2.8	3.7	3.5	4.8	5.7	6



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department  
Administrative Services

Responses to survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	57	50	57	56	57	56	56	58	57
Average Response	3.4	4.1	3.3	3.3	3.7	4.3	3.2	2.9	3

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	52	56	58	55	53	53	55	51	54
Average Response	3.9	3.7	3.1	3	5	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.3

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	52	58	54	55	50	54	54	47	56
Average Response	4.2	2.9	4.5	4.1	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.3	2.8

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	47	51	49	55	55	55	45	42	44
Average Response	4	5	3.4	4.2	3.8	4.8	4.5	3.8	3.8

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	43	42	42	50	50	49
Average Response	3.5	4	3.8	5.4	6	5.9

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Associate Zoning Administrator
- Associate City Planner
- Landscape Architectural Assoc.
- Planning Assistant
- Student Worker
- G.I.S. Specialist
- Management Assistant
- Steno Clerk
- Accountant
- Clerk
- City Planner
- Environmental Associate
- Planning Aide
- Photographer
- Zoning Analyst
- Graphics Designer
- Secretary
- Clerk Typist
- Accounting Clerk

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	217	211	217	215	217	218	215	217	218
Average Response	3.1	3.6	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.7	3.1	2.6	2.8

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	213	217	218	217	213	216	216	213	217
Average Response	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.2	4.6	3.1	2.7	3.2	3.1

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	213	218	217	216	212	216	216	212	216
Average Response	4	2.6	4.1	3.9	3.1	3.4	2.8	3	2.5

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	210	215	213	216	216	217	187	202	204
Average Response	3.2	4.6	2.9	4.3	3.9	4.3	3.9	3.2	3.2

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	203	201	203	209	209	211
Average Response	2.6	3.5	3.1	5	5.7	6.



**City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department**

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Senior City Planner
- Senior Clerk
- Chief Clerk
- Commission Secretary
- Senior Accountant
- Management Analyst
- Management Analyst I
- Personnel Office
- Graphics Supervisor
- Principal Cartographer
- G.I.S. Supervisor II
- G.I.S. Supervisor
- Systems Analyst I
- Operations & Statistical Research Analyst II
- Senior Clerk Typist
- Principal Clerk
- Commission Executive Secretary
- Senior Management Analyst
- Senior Accountant II
- Personnel Analyst II
- Dept. Personnel Office II
- Graphics Supervisor II
- Graphic Designer III
- Senior Cartographer
- G.I.S. Supervisor I
- Senior Systems Analyst
- Systems Analyst

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	75	74	75	74	75	74	75	76	75
Average Response	3.4	4	3.5	3.4	3.6	4.1	3.3	2.8	3

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	73	74	75	74	75	73	75	71	73
Average Response	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.3	4.8	3.2	2.9	3.3	3.2

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	73	76	72	73	71	72	70	68	74
Average Response	4	3.1	4.7	4	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.4	2.6

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	68	71	69	73	75	74	57	65	65
Average Response	3.5	4.7	3.2	4.5	3.4	4.1	4.6	3.7	3.4

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	67	65	65	72	73	70
Average Response	3.1	3.8	3.4	5.4	5.9	5.9

**City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department**

The following job title is included in this section:

- Principal City Planner
- Chief Management Analyst
- Deputy Director of Planning
- Chief Zoning Administrator
- Senior Systems Analyst II

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Average Response	5.	6.	4.5	5.	4.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Average Response	5.	5.	4.5	5.5	5.	4.	3.5	3.	3.5

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Average Response	3.5	3.	5.5	4.5	4.	5.	4.	4.	3.5

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Average Response	3.5	5.5	5.5	7.	6.5	4.	6.5	5.	4.5

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	2	2	2	2	2	2
Average Response	2.	4.	1.5	5.5	7.	7.



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job title is included in this section:

- Senior City Planner

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Average Response	2.9	4.7	3.9	3.7	3.6	4	3.7	1.9	3.1
Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Average Response	3.9	4	3.1	3.2	4.8	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.6
Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Average Response	4.1	3.1	5.1	3.9	2	3	2.9	2.9	2.4
Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	9	9
Average Response	2.7	5	3.2	5.4	4.3	3.6	3.4	3.7	2.2
Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42			
Number of Responses	9	9	9	9	9	9			
Average Response	2	3.9	2.9	4.3	5.3	5.3			

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job title is included in this section:

- Associate Zoning Administrator

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Average Response	3	5.3	2.5	3.8	4	3.8	4	1.8	3.8
Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Average Response	5.3	4.8	2	4	4.8	2.5	2.8	2.8	3
Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Average Response	5.3	2	4.8	4	3.8	4.5	2.8	4	2
Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
Average Response	1.5	5.3	4	6	5	2	5.7	3.3	4
Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42			
Number of Responses	4	4	4	4	4	4			
Average Response	3	4	2.3	5.3	6.3	6.5			



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job title is included in this section:

- City Planner

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	46	46	46	45	46	46	45	46	46
Average Response	2.4	3.5	3.3	2.7	3	3.4	2.8	2.1	2.3

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
Average Response	3.8	3.5	3	3.5	4.5	2.7	2.3	2.7	2.8

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	45	46	46	46	45	46	46	46	46
Average Response	3.9	2.4	3.7	3.8	2.7	2.9	2.3	2.9	2.2

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	46	46	46	46	46	46	40	45	46
Average Response	2.5	4.7	2.9	4.1	3.5	3.5	4	3	2.6

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	46	45	46	46	46	46
Average Response	2.1	3	2.7	4.9	5.5	6.1

**City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department**

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Senior Clerk Typist
- Principal Clerk
- Commission Executive Secretary
- Senior Clerk
- Chief Clerk
- Commission Secretary

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	28	28	28	28	28	28	27	28	28
Average Response	3.4	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.8	4.1	3.2	2.7	2.9

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	28	27	27	28	28	28	28	28	28
Average Response	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.2	4.4	3.3	2.9	3.3	3.1

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	27	28	28	27	28	27	26	25	28
Average Response	4.1	3.1	4.6	4	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.3	2.8

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	26	27	27	27	28	28	20	25	26
Average Response	3.8	4.8	3.4	4.7	3.6	4.4	5.2	3.8	3.8

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	26	26	26	28	28	28
Average Response	3.5	3.9	3.8	5.4	5.9	5.9



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Senior Management Analyst
- Senior Accountant II
- Personnel Analyst II
- Dept. Personnel Office II
- Senior Accountant
- Management Analyst
- Management Analyst I
- Personnel Office

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	7	6	7	8	7	6	8	8	7
Average Response	3.4	4.5	3.6	3.1	4.1	4.5	3.1	2.3	2.9
Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	6	7	8	6	7	5	7	5	5
Average Response	4.3	4.3	3	3.3	5.7	4	3.1	2.8	3.6
Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	7	8	5	7	5	6	6	4	8
Average Response	3.9	2.1	4.2	4.4	4.8	4	3.5	3.8	2.1
Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	4	6	5	7	8	7	6	4	3
Average Response	4.3	5.3	3.8	4.6	2.6	4.1	4	3.5	3
Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42			
Number of Responses	4	3	3	6	7	6			
Average Response	2.5	4	4	5.2	6.4	6.3			

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Graphics Supervisor II
- Graphics Designer III
- Senior Cartographer
- Graphics Supervisor
- Principal Cartographer

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	19	19	19	18	19	19	19	19	19
Average Response	3.3	3.7	3	3.1	3.3	4	3	3.2	2.9

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Average Response	3.7	3.2	3.3	3.2	5.4	2.9	3.1	3.5	3.6

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Average Response	3.9	3.1	4.8	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.4	2.7

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	19	17	18	18	18	18	11	18	18
Average Response	3.6	4.2	2.9	3.1	3.3	4.2	4.5	3.3	3.4

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	18	18	18	18	18	17
Average Response	3.4	3.5	3.3	5.6	5.7	5.7



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job titles are included in this section:

- G.I.S. Supervisor II
- G.I.S. Supervisor
- Systems Analyst I
- Operations and Statistical Research Analyst II
- G.I.S. Supervisor I
- Senior Systems Analyst
- Systems Analyst

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	12	12	12	11	12	12	12	12	12
Average Response	3.9	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.5	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.3

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	10	12
Average Response	3.4	3.9	4.1	3.9	4.6	3.6	2.8	3.5	3.3

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	11	12	11	11	10	11	10	11	10
Average Response	4.2	3.5	4.4	4.3	2.9	3.9	3.4	3.9	2.6

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	10	12	10	12	12	12	12	9	9
Average Response	3	4.7	3.2	5.3	3	3.8	4.8	4.3	3.6

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	10	9	9	11	11	10
Average Response	3	3.9	3	6.3	6.4	6.3

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Associate City Planner
- Landscape Architectural Assoc.
- Planning Assistant
- Student Worker
- G.I.S. Specialist
- Management Assistant
- Environmental Associate
- Planning Aide
- Photographer
- Zoning Analyst
- Graphics Designer

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	130	127	131	131	130	131	131	130	131
Average Response	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.7	3.1	2.5	2.8
Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	129	131	131	131	127	131	130	129	131
Average Response	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.1	4.5	3	2.6	3.2	2.9
Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	131
Average Response	4	2.6	4.2	3.8	3	3.3	2.7	2.8	2.4
Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	130	130	130	131	131	131	117	124	125
Average Response	3.3	4.5	2.6	4.3	3.9	4.5	3.7	3.1	3.1
Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42			
Number of Responses	124	124	124	125	126	127			
Average Response	2.5	3.5	3.1	5	5.7	6			



City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Secretary
- Clerk Typist
- Steno Clerk

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32	32
Average Response	4.1	4.3	3.4	4.2	3.8	4.4	3.5	3.6	3.1
Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	31	32	32	32	31	30	31	31	32
Average Response	4.2	3.9	4	3.3	4.7	4	3.3	3.7	3.9
Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	30	32	31	31	31	31	30	29	30
Average Response	4.1	3.1	4.5	4.4	3.9	4	3.6	3.6	3.5
Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	28	31	30	30	31	31	24	28	27
Average Response	3.9	5.1	3.7	4.8	4.6	4.9	4.6	4.3	4
Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42			
Number of Responses	28	27	28	30	30	30			
Average Response	3.6	4	3.9	5.4	5.9	5.7			

City of Los Angeles  
Planning Department

The following job titles are included in this section:

- Accountant
- Accounting Clerk
- Clerk

Responses to the survey correspond to the following guide:

- 1 - Totally Disagree
- 2 - Strongly Disagree
- 3 - Somewhat Disagree
- 4 - Neutral
- 5 - Somewhat Agree
- 6 - Strongly Agree
- 7 - Totally Agree

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Number of Responses	5	2	5	3	5	5	3	5	5
Average Response	3.6	4.5	5.4	3.3	4.6	4.6	4	4.4	4.2

Question	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
Number of Responses	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	3	4
Average Response	4.3	4.3	3.8	3.8	5.6	3.6	4.8	4	3.8

Question	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27
Number of Responses	3	5	5	4	1	4	5	2	5
Average Response	4.7	3.6	4.4	5.3	4	4.5	4.2	3	3.6

Question	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36
Number of Responses	2	4	3	5	4	5	3	1	2
Average Response	4.5	4.8	3	5	3.3	5.2	6	4	4.5

Question	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Number of Responses	1	1	1	4	3	4
Average Response	4	4	4	5.3	6	6.3



## **APPENDIX C**

### **LOS ANGELES PLANNING DEPARTMENT ISSUES IDENTIFIED AT EMPLOYEE MEETINGS**

The consultants held nine meetings during the month of January with groups of department employees. A total of 311 employees attended these meetings.

The meetings were held to introduce the consultants, explain the study, discuss organizational and management theory, and elicit employee concerns and issues. A questionnaire on organizational effectiveness was completed and collected during the meeting and a more expansive questionnaire was distributed for employees to complete within one week, (see Appendix A).

Departmental issues that were identified by employees attending the meetings are summarized below. These, of course, are employee perceptions and not necessarily facts. Nevertheless, perceptions are important and deserve careful attention. Many of these issues were verified by the consultants in other aspects of the study.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Communications are poor, both from management to staff and staff to management.
2. Scheduling of meetings is difficult due to poor communications and lack of automation equipment.
3. There is intentional information brokering in the department in order to gain power. Some information is withheld.
4. Technical specialists don't know much about the rest of the department. Lists of projects and staff assignments are not available.
5. No one knows if information has been conveyed to all groups.
6. The department is a pipeline for very destructive gossip.
7. Divisions don't know what other divisions are doing. Sometimes there is duplication of work.
8. The department reorganizes so often that no one can keep track of who does what.
9. The department telephone book is not kept up-to-date.
10. One division was given a new name and people in it were not informed what it was.

#### **CONSULTANTS**

1. Too much is spent on consultants.
2. The consulting process is too complicated and lengthy.

3. Consultants are not well managed resulting in poor products.
4. The Planning Commission gets too involved in selection of consultants.
5. Money is spent on consultants for things that do not get implemented.

### **MANAGEMENT**

1. Supervisors and mid-level managers are not really part of the department's management scheme.
2. Supervisors do not provide much help.
3. There is a lot of self serving going on.
4. There is a leadership vacuum.
5. Nothing is getting done. Rank and file do not know what to do and have fallen into poor work habits.
6. In many cases only division managers know the answer to questions and they are hard to find. More delegation of information and authority is needed.
7. The "annual" re-organization of the department is not productive.
8. Divisions need to work together more.
9. The department takes a political rather than technical point of view.
10. Priorities in the department are not clear and are continually shifting.
11. Managers are poor delegators.
12. There is a lack of consultation by management of people affected by management decisions.
13. No one wants to take charge and accept responsibility.
14. There are two lists of priorities: those given to the public and those that come from politicians.
15. There is excessive hierarchy and red tape.
16. Immediate supervisor may not know how to do the job but is afraid to admit it or tell you.
17. Department objectives are not clear.
18. There is a lack of clear philosophy and direction at the top.
19. There is confusion regarding where authority for certain decisions rest.
20. Managers are slow to make decisions.
21. Minute mistakes are viewed as more important than they really are. The goal is to find someone to blame rather than solve the problem and move on.
22. Management mentality is reactive rather than pro-active.



## ***OFFICE, EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY***

1. Physical conditions are poor. Concerns include:
  - a. poor janitorial service
  - b. lack of toilet paper
  - c. possible asbestos problems
2. Much of the equipment is old and out of date. Examples include drafting equipment, word processing equipment and programs.
3. Equipment is purchased but sits idle due to many months delay in having it installed.
4. The geographic separation of offices creates problems.
5. There is too much red tape in obtaining equipment and supplies.
6. There is need for a parcel based information system.
7. There is a major lack of automation
8. The telephone system is antiquated, calls are poorly routed and the paging system is inadequate.
9. Automated phone answering is too impersonal.
10. Microfilming is done but access to documents is poor.
11. It is hard to get computer equipment and program support is bad. Some staff have resorted to bringing in their own computers.
12. Accepting low bids, irregardless of quality is a problem.

## ***PERSONNEL***

1. Only a limited number of people in the department are truly knowledgeable.
2. Assignments should be narrowed and prioritized.
3. There is little feeling of unity in the department.
4. There is too much work.
5. More clarity is needed between planners and clerical regarding responsibilities.
6. Assignments are too dependent on others.
7. There is not enough concern for quality.
8. The department lacks idealism.
9. People are assigned to tasks above their skill levels.
10. People are placed randomly.
11. There is an unwritten rule that you have to move around to get promoted.
12. People with specialized skills are not being used in skill area (example, landscape architect).

13. Staff is tired of getting beat on.
14. There is a mismatch between planners and clerical, not enough clerical.
15. Clerical and drafting do not receive any respect by the planners.
16. There are severe internal penalties for rocking the boat.
17. Sometimes you are not allowed to move to another position because you are the expert in your current position.
18. There is negative competition among staff designed to make other staff look bad.
19. If you are not an "in" person, you don't move up.
20. Are people picked because they are interested in a position or simply to fill a hole?
21. There is concern that confidentiality of questionnaires may be violated by managers.
22. Some people in the department are extremely rude to others.
23. When you move from Associate Planner to City Planner, you are often moved to supervise a function that you do not know.
24. Ethical issues arise when former employees move to the private sector and receive preferential treatment by remaining staff.
25. There is a lack of team feeling.
26. When projects have long time lines, the department needs to find ways to reward and reinforce staff along the way.
27. There is no personnel manual.

## **POLICY**

1. The Zoning Code is poor.
2. Plan Amendments - cannot tell who is in charge, difficult to obtain latest amendments.
3. There is a lack of good information and data about the city.
4. The General Plan is ancient.
5. There is a lack of clear overall city direction.
6. There is no big picture, constant band-aids.
7. There is too much emphasis on what City Council wants rather than giving professional planning judgement.
8. There is too much interference from upper levels while an application is in process. Sometimes a decision is made before the analysis is completed.



## ***POLICY BODIES***

1. Policy makers, such as the Planning Commission, need more orientation about planning and the planning process.
2. The City Council and Planning Commission have not set clear policies.

## ***PROCEDURES***

1. Too many senior staff people answer telephones - - train more clerical.
2. There is an excessive number of forms and types of filings.
3. The time sheets being used have little values.
4. Everything is too bureaucratic - too much process.
5. Problems exist between line units and administration such as:
  - a. justification for new planners is too sketchy
  - b. bad handwriting and spelling
  - c. information comes in too late
  - d. daily time reports come in late
6. Old boiler plate procedures are maintained rather than obtaining new ideas.
7. For some functions record keeping is very poor.
8. There are no procedure manuals.
9. Both short and long term priorities are unclear.
10. Managers change reports and recommendations without consultation with staff involved.

## ***TRAINING & ORIENTATION***

1. There is a lack of all types of training throughout the department.
2. No training manuals.
3. Administrative manuals are old, out of date and not used.
4. Orientation program for new employees is poor.
5. Orientation for non-planners is particularly poor. A simplified description of what the department and planners do is needed.
6. There is a lack of professional development, too compartmentalized.
7. No formal training for new assignments is given.

# APPENDIX D

## MANAGEMENT RETREAT

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### BACKGROUND

This appendix summarizes the presentation and discussions that took place at the Los Angeles City Planning Department Management Retreat. Those in attendance at the all day January 14, 1991 meeting included:

Melanie Fallon	Director
Frank Eberhard	Deputy Director
Robert Sutton	Neighborhood Planning
R. Ann Siracusa	City-wide Planning
Bob Janovici	Office of Zoning Administration
David Lessley	Plan Implementation
Jack Sedwick	Development and Design
Ray Jantz	Administrative Services

### FORMAT

Each deputy director and division head was given 10 minutes to prepare an oral presentation regarding the mission, goals and objectives and linkage of their respective operating units. During this time, the remaining managers discussed the division in the absence of the division manager. The deputy director overseeing the respective divisions made a ten minute presentation followed by a ten minute presentation by the division head. This was followed by 20 minutes of open discussion with the other participants. The resulting mission, goals and objectives and issues are summarized for each division in the following pages.



## City-Wide Planning

Mission	Goals, Objectives	Issues
<p>To prepare long range plans for the City of Los Angeles and meet State and Federal mandates.</p> <p>Intellectual glue that holds the planning process together. City-wide elements are the foundations for neighborhood plans.</p>	<p>Update all city-wide plans, also city-wide projects that relate to the plan.</p>	<p>Since city-wide plan is poor, there is no clear policy or thread to hold community plans together, i.e., the cart before the horse. Many elements are out-of-date and inconsistent. Centers concept was discredited but nothing was put in its place;</p> <p>Low and moderate income housing, location, income level diversity;</p> <p>Lack of communication both within the Division and among the Departments, i.e., what are the policies?</p> <p>Too much work; conflicting priorities; limited resources;</p> <p>Long range planning is not supported politically; that support which is provided is weak;</p> <p>Poor quality of product due to inconsistent work standards and principles;</p> <p>Geographic separation from department is a problem;</p> <p>Morale is low; staff know that long range planning is the first to go in a budget crunch;</p> <p>Division lacks clarity of purpose, direction and importance;</p> <p>Balance growth unit - High quality of work; not so for housing section. Plan revision section low productivity;</p> <p>Lack of priority from Systems &amp; Mapping Division impacts this unit. Lack of a good data base. Lack of support from Administration Division - too much bureaucracy.</p>

## Neighborhood

Mission	Goals, Objectives	Issues
<p>To prepare and implement plans for neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Provide specific guidance in the design and implementation of community plans for neighborhoods, i.e., details that couldn't be handled in the Community Plans - 14 adopted, 27 in progress.</p> <p>Respond to Council inquiries and address specific problems. The fix-it division.</p> <p>Solutions to local problems.</p> <p>Keep the Council happy.</p>	<p>Conflicting priorities. General Plan fix-it shop. Brush fire planning. Staff not well trained to work with public;</p> <p>Lack of office automation;</p> <p>Lack of political muscle and support;</p> <p>Council requests ahead of staff technical capabilities;</p> <p>Poor internal communication;</p> <p>Slowness of City Attorney's office;</p> <p>Lack of senior and highly skilled staff;</p> <p>Lack of credibility - Council reverses staff frequently and at last minute;</p> <p>Takes too long to do plans;</p> <p>Need better systems and standardization of approaches;</p> <p>Neighborhood and Specific Plan are creating major implementation problems;</p> <p>Lack of understanding of department-wide goals and issues. Fix-it focus conflicts with city-wide policy;</p> <p>Staff needs more direction.</p>



## Zoning Administration

Mission	Goals, Objectives	Issues
<p>Implement City-wide general plan regarding all land use and zoning matters by processing applications and interpreting zoning regulations.</p>	<p>Process all applications within the 75 day mandated requirement.</p> <p>Staff public counters at City Hall, Valley, San Pedro, West L.A.</p> <p>Provide technical support to public.</p> <p>Find administrative relief when nothing else works.</p>	<p>Poor productivity of staff particularly in research and analysis, morale problem;</p> <p>Appearance of conflicting goals - implement neighborhood and community goals which may be in conflict with city-wide goals;</p> <p>Conflict within the Department regarding classification and compensation of Zoning Administrators. Best people become Zoning Administrators at detriment of other divisions;</p> <p>Independence and role and responsibility of office vis-a-vis department impedes department camaraderies;</p> <p>Large backlog;</p> <p>Are Zoning Administrators productive enough? Are there too many?</p> <p>Staff view counter functions as below them;</p> <p>Slowness in issuing opinion impacts credibility;</p> <p>Some conditional uses shouldn't require conditional uses.</p>

## Plan Implementation

Mission	Goals, Objectives	Issues
<p>Process all cases that go to the Commission in implementing the General Plan.</p>	<p>Provide timely and effective support to Planning Commission.</p> <p>Process cases in a timely manner.</p> <p>Process all Environmental Impact Reports in a timely and cost-effective manner.</p> <p>Advise applicants prior to filing.</p>	<p>Quality control - Lack of professional standards.</p> <p>Use of technology, i.e., drafting;</p> <p>Impact of policies, i.e., batching of permits for exemptions under interim study ordinances - work load and staffing;</p> <p>Standardize format and content;</p> <p>Growing backlog of cases;</p> <p>Political Interference;</p> <p>EIR process is not working; quality varies and backlog is growing;</p> <p>No standardized work processes and procedures;</p> <p>Staff is confused regarding the role and use of consultants;</p> <p>Inadequate work space;</p> <p>Slow mapping of ordinances;</p> <p>Lack of understanding of Department-wide goals and General Plan perspective;</p> <p>Planning Commission too involved in Department administration;</p> <p>Problems with batching process;</p> <p>Need for training and work manuals.</p>



## Development & Design

Mission	Goals, Objectives	Issues
<p>To process applications for division of land and site plan development consistent with General Plan and State sub-division map act and sensitive to urban design matters.</p>	<p>Process plans in an efficient and timely manner consistent with a General Plan.</p>	<p>Legal constraints regarding time frame for case processing;</p> <p>Public noticing requirements burden staff;</p> <p>Unclear design standards;</p> <p>Increasing use of overtime to get day to day work done;</p> <p>Staffing resources; shortage of clerical;</p> <p>Fluctuating caseload is difficult to predict and manage;</p> <p>Poor internal communication;</p> <p>Lack of training;</p> <p>Poor public relations and client service;</p> <p>One stop counter is not working;</p> <p>Growing backlog;</p> <p>Poor working condition, space, files, lack of technology;</p> <p>Lack of direction regarding city-wide goals;</p> <p>No one answers telephones.</p>

## Administrative Services

Mission	Goals, Objectives	Issues
<p>To support the planning department with timely and adequate resources.</p>	<p>Process paperwork in an efficient and effective manner.</p>	<p>Planner vs. Administrator mentality;</p> <p>Cumbersome and slow procedures;</p>
	<p>Fill vacancy in staff position in an efficient and effective manner.</p>	<p>Bureaucratic;</p> <p>Division is perceived as unresponsive, reactive rather than pro-active;</p>
	<p>Provide central word processing services in a cost-effective manner.</p>	<p>Use of technology is limited and antiquated;</p> <p>Major credibility problem with line personnel;</p>
	<p>Handle some graphics for Council offices and some departments.</p>	<p>Poor systems;</p> <p>Personnel process is slow and counter-productive to mission;</p>
	<p>Handle central files.</p>	<p>Limited work space;</p> <p>Lacks standardization of policies and procedures, no administrative manual;</p> <p>Poor budgetary preparation, i.e., policies and procedures;</p> <p>Conflict between systems division and business support systems;</p> <p>Limited training focus;</p> <p>Poor communications division to planners and planners to division;</p> <p>Telephone system is antiquated.</p>



## Systems & Mapping

Mission	Goals, Objectives	Issues
<p>To develop information systems and data base for use throughout the city.</p>	<p>Design, implement and maintain a Geographic Information System and database.</p> <p>Service department computer systems.</p> <p>Demographic information base.</p>	<p>Poor communication;</p> <p>Outmoded technology;</p> <p>Systems organization fragmented at best;</p> <p>System maintenance is not addressed;</p> <p>Lack of printers;</p> <p>Inadequate staffing;</p> <p>Training, particularly computer;</p> <p>Not clear regarding products and how the rest of the department can use them.</p>

# APPENDIX E

## EXTERNAL INTERVIEWS

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The consultants conducted face to face interviews with 45 individuals who are outside the Planning Department. These included members and staff of the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Adjustment, City Administrative Office, Legislative Office, department heads, developers, citizen organizations and others. All respondents were guaranteed the confidentiality of their responses. The interviews were intended to elicit the respondents' views and opinions on positive and negative aspects of the City's planning program and to seek ideas for change that will improve and enhance the program.

In considering the results of the interviews, the reader must bear in mind that unlike documents and statistics, the views expressed by individuals are subjective and may reflect personal biases. Nonetheless, they are at least as important as the objective material because it is these people, with their feelings and prejudices, who work daily with, control, or are affected by, the area under study. A second important consideration is that in analyzing the interviews, it may not be as important to determine whether a particular response is "correct" as it is to simply accept a response. Tom Peters, the noted management consultant, has said, "Perception is everything." In other words, perception is reality to the person holding the perception.

There was a wide range of responses to questions posed during the interviews, with some individuals' statements diametrically opposed to others. However, in presenting the conclusions, we are trying to impart the general sense of the majority of the responses and, rather than focusing on critical comment for its own sake, using criticism as a stepping-stone for positive recommendations later in the analysis. Comments are arranged by topics in the following narrative.

### OVERALL PERSPECTIVE

There is a broad consensus of opinion that planning in Los Angeles is desperately needed but that it is currently in need of substantial improvement. Nevertheless, there is some opinion that the situation is this way because people have wanted it this way. The City has been a pro-growth city with much less attention to planning than many California communities. However, citizens are increasingly demanding more attention to planning.

The Planning Department is seen as a major, but not the only, problem in Los Angeles solving its planning problems. Virtually every aspect of the city's governmental structure was criticized in the interviews. It was suggested that the City is running on a 1928 charter which is like "practicing medicine in the dark ages". There is a consensus that the Mayor and Council need to recognize that they and the city "need successful planning programs and a successful planning department".



The City itself is caught between concerns about growth and a dynamic economy. There is a need to think through a sound direction for the city.. The City is "caught up in projects" and lacks an overall planning perspective. Planning as practiced is seen as mostly "an argument about entitlements."

## **MAYOR'S OFFICE**

It is clear that all concerned parties are looking to the Mayor's Office for leadership in planning the future of the City. From a governmental structure perspective -- weak mayor, independent CRA and fifteen independent City Council members -- this expectation may not be fair or realistic. Nevertheless, it is a widely held perception and therefore a reality that must be dealt with. More important, someone must assume the responsibility for leading the development of the second largest city in the nation and who better than the elected mayor.

The city charter and structure is seen as not providing much power in the Mayor's office. The Mayor's appointment of staff advisor in the planning area is seen as a positive move. Opportunities for even additional planning leadership at the Mayor's level are considered desirable.

## **CITY COUNCIL**

Each council member is seen as a "mini-mayor" within his/her council district and the entire Council normally accepts the direction set by the district member. The unwritten rule is, "Don't interfere in someone else's district." There tends to be a lack of Council interest in city-wide issues and decisions within districts are viewed as relating mostly to politics, rather than good planning - the Council is sometimes seen as "too politicized". It is considered difficult, if not impossible, to have any kind of vision for a Council District because of the way district boundaries are drawn.

Council offices place heavy demands on the Planning Department and there is no accepted system for sorting out priorities. The amount of policy or requests coming from the Council is considered hard to accommodate. "Staff needs to come up with ingenious responses to Council requests" - planners don't have a chance to be independent. While some of the council offices want strong professional opinions from the planners, others expect the department to "do exactly what they are told."

Many staff of the Council offices relate to the Planning Department on a daily basis, providing opinion and pressure on individual issues and cases. Some of the Council offices are viewed as willing to listen if, "they could only get anything from the Planning Department". The Council offices see themselves as being responsive to citizen concerns and doing some of the planning that the Planning Department isn't doing.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Overall, the Planning Commission is seen as very important in providing a city-wide perspective. Many people interviewed felt the Commission is doing a good job, however, some would like to see more leadership from the Commission. Its effectiveness appears to be dependent upon personalities and like many political bodies, it appears to get bogged down in petty conflicts related thereto. The Commission is seen as focusing on the incremental decisions with little focus on the long term big picture issues. Thus, the Commission has a tendency to become involved in the day to day administration and organization of the Department.

## **PLANNING DIRECTOR**

Most people interviewed had a strong opinion about the new Planning Director. They want a "forceful" director who has "guts", someone who is pro-active, "incredibly politically savvy" and "willing to play hard ball". Needed is someone who will lead. Like any bureaucrat caught in a policy and leadership vacuum, success is seen as hard to come by. It is a difficult position and one that requires an unusually high level of political skills.

## **CITY ATTORNEY**

There was a considerable opinion that the City Attorney's office is a major problem for planning. Decisions are described as consistently slow in coming and at times the attorney's office is seen as having an inappropriate bias - such as on AB283.

The solution to this problem is seen as having a number of attorneys permanently assigned to the Planning Department and actually located within the Department.

## **BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

Views of the Building Department's relation to planning were mixed. Some view the Building Department as doing a good job with a difficult assignment. Others view the Building Department as having "a mind set of the building trades", with planning conditions not getting implemented. Some see the Building Department as being asked to enforce things they don't believe in.

## **CPAC's**

Although there is support for more citizen involvement in planning, there are mixed reviews in relation to the Community Planning groups. Some want them elected, others appointed. Some want them to have decision power, others only advisory. The CPAC's are viewed as not always representing the entire community and there is a need for citizen outreach beyond the CPAC's.



## **REDEVELOPMENT**

Most people interviewed expressed the need for a better relationship between the redevelopment agency (CRA), and the Planning Department. At minimum, there was a feeling that the city-wide planning perspective need better integration into redevelopment, a few suggested a full merger of the Planning Department and CRA. The Planning Department is generally seen as having been irrelevant to the redevelopment process. A number of people would like to see the Planning Commission take a stronger leadership role in relation to redevelopment.

## **OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

Everyone believes there is poor coordination between departments in Los Angeles with no apparent way to solve this problem. Each department is essentially on their own. Everyone is ready to point the finger if you "screw it up". There is a feeling that all the planning work does not have to be done in the Planning Department but it does need to be coordinated. Some feel the General Plan Advisory Board could help coordination but it is represented at too low a level.

## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

The Planning Department is seen as a giant bureaucracy that is stuck in "old ways". The department is not coherent. "A normal human being walking through the front door couldn't figure out how to get something done or where it stood". Documents coming out of the department have five signatures. The department establishes or has inherited systems that "almost prohibit work from getting done". "Projects trickle down through the hierarchy but nothing really happens until they reach the assistant or associate level." The department needs to respond to a changing world. It does more paper pushing than actual planning. It's almost "like the reason for the department is form rather than substance". The department has never really freed itself from politics. It is seen as over politicized. The department should be pro-active rather than reactive. The department is seen as having been given more and more resources, but with inadequate results.

Clients indicate that they receive conflicting information when submitting applications for approval. Desired is more public information, closer supervision and accountability in meeting time limits with respect to case processing through the Department.

The planners do not know what's going on in the communities, nor how to effectively deal with the communities. Different divisions in the department don't know what other divisions are doing. Some of the reports coming out of the department are seen as poorly written, with poor logic and at times irrelevant.

As a minority opinion, one person suggested that of all the departments in the city, "planning is the best".

Overall the staff of the department is seen as competent and well-intentioned with some excellent people, although some feel the quality has been deteriorating and turnover has been high. Some view planning department management as part of the "good ol' boy" network and "top heavy". Others suggest that there are "dedicated and bright planners in the department - just head them in the right direction".

There is a general perception that there is constant turnover in the Department, which has greatly affected the Department's ability to provide efficient and effective services. Personnel are seen as being promoted to supervisory responsibilities without sufficient training and knowledge to supervise their subordinates. The absence of manuals and guides make it difficult for new hires to perform their assignments without constant supervision from supervisors.

Some suggest that specialist skills seem to be missing in the department such as economists, environmentalists, designers, demographers.

## **THE OVERALL PLANNING SYSTEM**

The overall planning system is seen by many as having broken down. The city-wide plan is out-of-date, community plans are out-of-date, and the Zoning Ordinance is out-of-date. There are numerous demands for specific plans and interim ordinances with little consistency. There are overlapping regulations. The environmental process is not working. Some parts of the city have numerous regulations, others few.

## **COMMUNITY PLANS**

Community plans are viewed as being important but there is a great frustration about these being out-of-date and how long it takes to update them. "By the time a community plan gets done, half the people who were initially interested are gone." The perception is that the plans are so technical that they "disenfranchise" everyone.

The roles of Council, citizens and staff are not clear in the community planning process. The Planning Department is viewed as needing to do a better job. Some would like to see a planner assigned to each community plan area. "The staff that was to be assigned to updating the community plan has been bled off to other areas."

## **DECENTRALIZATION**

There was mixed opinion on the concept of decentralizing planning. Some see the city as unwieldy and needing decentralized planning similar to New York or London but also with a strong centralized planning function. The place to start this would be in the Valley office. Others feel decentralization could further politicize planning. They also doubted the Planning Department could manage a



decentralized function. Some felt that although decentralization may be useful, it would require the entire city to decentralize and would also require charter changes. Concerns in relation to consistency were also expressed. The Planning Department is seen as not doing a good job on either regional issues or local issues, they "are stuck in the middle."

## **TRAINING**

Training is viewed as lacking and needed at all levels of the Planning Department. Staff seem to want more training. There is a particular need for management training.

## **TECHNOLOGY/WORKING CONDITIONS**

The Planning Department is seen as being out-of-date in regards to technology. Also some of the working conditions are viewed as "disgusting". There is a lack of good signage; it's hard to find some functions.

## **PRIORITIES**

There is a lack of clear priorities in the Planning Department and what priorities exist keep changing - there is a "hither and yon" system. There is a need for leadership within the department on priorities. The Planning Department needs to be able to say "no" to Council requests.

## **TRANSPORTATION - TRAFFIC**

Traffic problems and transportation is seen as one of the biggest Los Angeles issues and no department in the City is doing a good job on this issue. The problem is how to mesh transportation and land use and the planning department must be more involved with this issue.

## **BALANCED GROWTH ELEMENT**

The proposed balanced growth element is not well understood. Some see it as a way to do needed city-wide planning, others see it as a waste of time.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **COMMENTS BY NATIONAL PEER REVIEW PANEL**

**Cynthia Buchanan**

Planning Director, City of Memphis

**Oliver Byrum**

Director of Planning & Building, City of Minneapolis

**Con Howe**

Planning Director, New York City

**Robert Paternoster**

Director of Planning & Building, City of Long Beach

**Sergio Rodriguez**

Planning Director, City of Miami

**Gary Schoennauer**

Director of Planning, City of San Jose.



**TO: Paul Zucker**

**FROM: Con Howe**

**DATE: April 5, 1991**

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Rather than repeat my remarks from the breakfast presentation on March 5, let me expand in this memo on a few points I made that morning.

### **Building a Constituency**

Regardless of the formal, legal powers of a planning department (or commission). The agency must be continually building a constituency in order to assure a significant voice in decisions and impact on the city. This is especially true in cities and governments that have the scale of New York or Los Angeles. While the mix of constituencies will change over time, the planning department must continually work to broaden that mix.

Every point of contact outside the department is a potential constituent: individual applicants, neighborhood associations, city wide civic, professional and industry organizations, media, the Mayor and staff, the Council and staff, and other public agencies. Every employee -from the leadership to the clerk- must have a "constituent-orientation" where they are "selling" the services and ideas of the planning department. Every constituent should walk away from a contact with the planning agency with a positive response to one of these questions: "Did they (the planners) answer my question? Did they provide accurate and useful information/data? Did they help resolve my problem or help me achieve my objective (where they agreed with that objective)?"

Responding to all these constituents is not the only role of a planning department, but, doing it well, establishes the credibility that the department needs in undertaking its own initiatives and positions.

### **Workload**

In cities like Los Angeles and New York, the volume of requests to the planning department (applications, environmental reviews, requests for studies and other actions) will inundate it, regardless of the staffing levels permitted by budget. Every effort should be made to rationalize the inflow: e.g., argue against overly burdensome regulations, seek to simplify existing regulations. Still the processing workload must be tamed or it will forever eat into the planning capacity (not that application review is not a legitimate and important tool of planning).

Several approaches can help keep the processing workload under control: management should give staff clear direction and training on what is the appropriate level of review or analysis for categories of actions, what is the priority among categories, what are acceptable "short cuts", what are the expected time frames for review.

There should be an application monitoring system to track progress and time frame. Understandably most applications are circulated to a number of offices for review. Still, one staff person should be clearly designated as the "project manager", responsible for seeing that the review is completed properly and on time.

It seems to me there are also acceptable "short-cuts" to responding to the volume of requests for planning studies from councilmembers, neighborhood groups, etc. Even in a very diverse city, certain issues or problems will be at the heart of requests from different areas. Management can develop a standard approach to that issue or problem and train staff accordingly. Adjustments to that approach can be tailored to differences among locales. Studies and the documents that result from them can be focused on the most important issue or the problem most susceptible to a planning solution rather than becoming swamped in "comprehensiveness".

Sometimes a professional "quick and dirty" job is better than telling a group we can't do anything for you, or embarking on a multi-year study.

Staff capacity saved by tight management of processing and planning workload can be devoted to the small number of long-range comprehensive initiatives that any planning agency can undertake at any one time.

The above comments are not intended as a specific evaluation of the Los Angeles planning program, to which I've had such a brief exposure. They are observations that I believe pertain to any big city planning agency.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING

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(213) 590-8651

March 18, 1991

Paul Zucker  
Zucker Systems  
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San Diego, CA 92121-2928

Dear Paul:

As you requested, I am writing to provide a written summary of my observations and recommendations on the Los Angeles Planning Department following our peer review on March 2-5.

My most detailed comments are on the development process, the subject which I investigated in detail as part of the peer review process. These recommendations, which generally follow my oral presentation, are attached to this letter.

As you requested, I am also enclosing a copy of the summary of the budget for the Department of Planning and Building in the City of Long Beach. The population of our City is approximately 430,000, as of the 1990 Census.

The following are a few general comments not specifically related to my area of detailed investigation:

- Need for stronger leadership/vision/policy direction  
The Department has obviously fallen into a reactive mode and is therefore unable to promote the necessary long-range vision for the City. Indeed, the inability of the Department to articulate a long-range vision may be partly responsible for the present situation in which they are constantly forced to react to individual initiatives from the City Council. I sensed some frustration on the part of the staff that the Department is not listened to by other departments and elected officials. Planning will be listened to if it has something important to contribute. If the contribution to decision-making is no more than is brought to the table by other departments and elected officials, the planning contribution becomes redundant. Planners should do what they do best, i.e., develop the overall planning/policy context within which individual decisions can be made. Although such a

policy context sometimes "gets in the way" of pragmatic decision-making, more often decision-makers appreciate the guidance that such a long-range vision can give to shorter range decisions.

- Need for more emphasis on management

Most of the internal problems of the Department which we encountered are management problems, pure and simple. The management staff must take responsibility for resolving these problems and should involve the rest of the staff in their resolution. There appears to be more competition among management staff than is productive. Clearly, a team approach to management is required with all members pulling in the same direction. This will be a key challenge for the new planning director.

- Need to explore decentralization

Los Angeles is too large a city to make all of the planning decisions downtown. Many issues have no city-wide significance and can be resolved at the local level with only a minimum of long-range policy guidance from centralized planning. The key is to clearly define which issues are local in nature and which are of city-wide significance. Local issues should have a very heavy involvement of local citizens and businessmen in their resolution. I would not advise, however, the delegation of this decision-making to a citizen group, such as has been done in some instances with design review. As most members of the peer group agreed, I believe it would be difficult to move into full scale decentralization at this time. Rather, immediate attention should be on the operation of the department, with decentralization phased in at a later date.

- Need to improve interactive processes

The lack of a political structure with a strong executive tends to establish strong vertical relationships, and very weak horizontal ones. Specifically, each department relates directly to each of the 15 council offices, with very little interdepartmental cooperation. Similarly, each division of the planning department relates to the director, to the Commission, or to the hearing board without an adequate amount of interdivisional cooperation. Although the ideal solution would be to reorganize the city government with a stronger executive function, this is obviously not in the realm of possibility in the immediate future. Therefore, the director must work to promote horizontal relationships, even though they buck the natural trend. Opportunities should be sought where



there is mutual advantage in cooperation; the Department should avoid involvement in detailed decision-making of other departments which would be seen as meddling.

- Need for structured work program and priorities

Without a structured work program, it is impossible for the Department to avoid the ever-increasing demands by Council, the Commission and others for special studies which make it impossible to have a long-range comprehensible focus. With a work program in place which is recognized by both the Council and the Commission, staff can insist that elected and appointed officials identify those projects which should be deferred in order to undertake a new desired special study.

- Need to develop political constituencies

One of the positive observations which the peer group had in talking to individuals outside the Department was that there was a general recognition of the need in Los Angeles for good planning. The degree to which the Department can provide good planning services will determine the extent to which it is able to develop strong political constituencies. The Department should view its contacts with citizens, businessmen and developers as opportunities to build these constituencies, not by doing "favors," but by providing the kind of planning services which these individuals and agencies need and expect.

The above observations underscore the importance of selecting the right person for the planning director's position. Clearly, the new director must possess both very strong management skills and outstanding political skills. It is quite possible that the City will be unable to find a single person with both these strengths who will have sufficient time to give adequate attention to both. Consideration might be given to utilizing a deputy director for one of the two roles. For instance, for many years in the City of Philadelphia, planning director Ed Bacon had two deputy directors, one in charge of internal management, and the other in charge of political relationships. The latter had no planning experience, but a great deal of political experience over many years in the City. While Ed Bacon obviously had to participate in the more important political deals, he could depend upon Ed Croley to manage the day-to-day political relationships, and to insure that the planning function was not getting too far afield from political reality. The Planning Commission may wish to consider such an organizational scheme if they are unable to find all the qualities they seek in a single candidate for director.

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The above, somewhat random thoughts, together with the attached summary of my presentation, complete my formal input to the peer review process. I would be happy, however, to discuss any specific matters further with you, or to review and comment on your draft report when it is prepared. I believe that the peer review process went very well, and I enjoyed participating. I hope that we made an important contribution to your study and to the future of the Planning Department in Los Angeles.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Paternoster  
Director of Planning  
and Building

RP/kmb

Att.



## Critique of the Los Angeles Development Process

Robert Paternoster  
Director of Planning and Building  
City of Long Beach

Like all cities in California, Los Angeles has a very complex set of regulations governing development in the city. This situation is further complicated in Los Angeles by the tendency of City Council to constantly legislate more and more regulations. It is also complicated by a planning system which was set up historically not to be efficient nor to be oriented toward customer service, but rather to provide a high degree of objectivity which is free from political influence. Unfortunately, even this last objective has been gradually lost over time as the system succumbed more and more to political pressures.

I found the Department to be generally staffed with excellent people who were dedicated to their work. The zoning administrators and hearing examiners, in particular, enjoy a high degree of respect. Among the staff positions, they have the clearest sense of responsibility, the most sharply defined role and lack of confusion as to who is their client. As a result, they enjoy the greatest level of self-respect. Nevertheless, there exists within the Department huge development processing backlogs which have led many on the staff to believe that they can never get caught up and properly manage the process unless additional staff are hired. I am not convinced that more staff are needed immediately. What is clearly needed is better management and a better processing system. Once these are in place, the Department can more accurately determine whether or not additional staff are required.

My comments and recommendations regarding the development process are organized into the following eleven categories:

### 1. Construction services center

The construction services center brings together in one location representatives of the various departments which must approve development permits. It fails, however, in its basic mission to integrate, streamline, and make more comprehensible the development approval process of the City.

The center should be made more user-friendly. A receptionist function is necessary where human beings can greet customers and direct them to the proper counter. The plethora of hand-made signs around the counter is evidence of the need for clients to have better direction on how to use its facilities.

The center should have a single manager to coordinate the entire operation. Such a manager could be drawn from any one of the departments, such as the Building Department. The manager could integrate the entire permit system, including the automated processing system described below.

2. Automated permit processing system

An automated permit processing system should be established in the construction services center, and each of the counters should be linked to it through the computer terminals. Basic information on applications would be entered on a situs basis, at the first counter of contact, and additional information would be added by the other counters which deal with the permit. The computer system could actually issue the permit and receipt when the permit fee is paid at the cashier, and keep the necessary financial records. An important spin-off of such a permit processing system is the management reports which it can generate regarding the permit processing system. Managers can keep track of the time which it takes to process various applications, can observe productivity of various counters and individuals, and can observe and respond to variations in workload. An automated permit processing system should improve productivity, reduce errors and omissions, and provide for better management control and monitoring.

3. A single project planner for each project

Except for the very smallest projects, it appears that no one at the City views a project as a whole. Rather, each sees only the part of the project which he or she is responsible for reviewing. To the extent possible, a project planner should be assigned when an application is first filed, and should be responsible for processing the application through to its ultimate conclusion (Planning Commission and/or City Council action). This will build continuity and accountability into the process, and probably also improve staff morale.

4. Targets for processing time and productivity

The Department should establish specific targets for the time which it should take to process each type of application. Productivity goals should also be set in terms of the number of applications, reports, etc., expected of each employee. Once targets are set, performance in achieving the targets should be monitored on a regular basis. When an application is initially filed, the applicant should receive the name of his project planner and a target date for the public hearing or hearings required.

5. Variable Depth and Breadth of Analysis

Each development application should get the depth and breadth of analysis which it requires, and no more. Environmental reviews, for instance, should focus on the key environmental impacts and deal more superficially with less important impacts. When projects are clearly less controversial, the environmental reports can be in less detail. It appears that the reports prepared by the zoning administrators are very complete and comprehensive, much more than is needed in many cases. One way to improve the quantity of



output is to reduce the quantity of paper produced. I would not suggest reducing the quality of the planning review; rather I am recommending a sharper focus on the issues of greatest importance.

6. Self-sustaining fee structure

One way to accomplish the above two recommendations is to establish a self-sustaining fee structure for the development permitting process. The Department might even explore making the development permitting process an enterprise fund. In order to charge fees which fully cover processing costs, the Department must first establish a better cost accounting system which clearly identifies the direct, indirect and overhead costs of all processing. I would not be surprised if such a cost accounting system would result in very high application fees, so high that they are non-competitive with surrounding jurisdictions. This would automatically require streamlining of the process to reduce the level of staff effort to the minimum required to process each application.

7. Streamlining zoning administration

The zoning administrators are doing an excellent job and, as noted above, have a high degree of respect among decision-makers. Unfortunately, most cities can no longer afford to provide the level of service being provided by the zoning administrators in Los Angeles. If a self-sustaining fee structure is established, I suspect that the zoning administrators will have to cut back dramatically on their "hand holding" of applicants, and spend much of their time on hearing and resolving cases.

8. Broaden policy input for hearing examiners

Like the zoning administrators, the hearing examiners are doing an excellent job and are providing the Planning Commission with very thorough reports. The big question is whether or not their recommendations represent Department policy. Apparently, senior staff has very little input into their recommendations to the Commission. The actions on which the hearing examiners recommend are key policy implementing actions (e.g., zone changes, plan amendments). Recommendations on such issues demand the input of both City-wide planning and neighborhood planning. Unlike recommendations of the zoning administrator which are quasi-judicial in nature, the recommendations of hearing examiners do not have to be "impartial". They must be consistent with and supportive of the long-range planning goals of the City.

9. Experiment with decentralization

Given the present level of problems with the Department, it is probably premature to launch a new effort like decentralization. Nevertheless, the Department might experiment with

decentralization with the intent to fully implement it at a later date if successful. At least the zoning administration and community planning function should be decentralized to outlying communities. Many of the planning issues are purely local in nature, and should be resolved at the local level where access is convenient for the citizens involved. Consideration should be given to assigning community planners to geographic areas, rather than have them bouncing around the city from one specific plan to another. The assignment to specific geographic areas will insure that all neighborhoods in the City have equal access to planning services, not just those which make the strongest demands.

10. Council Planning Committee

As I understand it, the Council Planning Committee does not report out the Planning Commission recommendation when it makes its recommendation to the Council. I recommend that the Committee include the action of the Planning Commission in its report to the full Council.

11. Cost of administering Council mandated regulations

The City Council should consider the cost of administering the regulations which they legislate. A process of fiscal impact analysis should be established whereby Council must be aware of the cost of administering a new regulation before they adopt it. With this information available, the Council should either allocate additional funds to support the new program, or concur in a shift in priorities in the Department's work program.



Attachment "A"

Los Angeles Planning Department Peer Review

Topic: Political/Professional Relationships

Lead Panel Member: Sergio Rodriguez  
Second Panel Member: Gary Schoennauer

The following are my comments on the topic that I was responsible for: Political/Professional Relationships.

Topic Description:

1. How to handle the fine line between political sensitivity and professional judgement.
2. How to work within a diffused leadership structure. Los Angeles has 15 city councilpersons who have legislative responsibility and some administrative duties. There is no City Manager. The City Administrative Office primarily handles budget. There is also a weak Mayor structure.
3. How to meet numerous requests from 15 separate Council districts, Mayor's office, Planning Commission and others.

Since this is a somewhat nebulous area, a lot of my comments are based on perception. The following observations are not necessarily reflecting the present administration of the Planning Department, because it is too soon to evaluate it; but they are based on interviews, briefings, written material received, previous interviews done by Zucker Systems and other groups, newspaper articles, and our own personal observation.

## I. OBSERVATIONS ON THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT AS A WHOLE:

- o There has been a leadership void in the last few years.
- o The professional staff got mixed reviews but, in general, they are perceived as a substantial group of good professionals--competent and capable of good judgement in many instances--hard working and, specially, well-meaning.
- o Problem with credibility.
- o Too bureaucratic.
- o Nothing gets done on time (a sense of deadline is missing from top to bottom, except maybe the Zoning Hearing Examiners). It takes too long to get projects finished (sometimes several years) and there is a backlog on EIRs.
- o The staff seems to be demoralized.
- o There seems to be a lot of political interference city-wide; this might be a result of the system with one weak Mayor and 15 strong mini-Mayors (or Council members). This might indicate a need for a Charter reform.
- o The Planning Department is passive in the redevelopment process and, sometimes, in major projects (e.g., Porter Ranch and Central City West).
- o The department is perceived as playing catch-up with the Council.
- o Internally, the delegation of authority is not efficient.
- o Communication is not good.
- o There seems to be a need to get things done "quick and dirty."
- o The Planning staff work got mixed reviews by the Council; not well perceived by some Council/Commission members; and at the same time, some Council staff hold the department in high regard.
- o The staff is perceived as not being strong enough and trying to please the City Council and Planning Commission.
- o The procedures being followed are perceived as being slow and cumbersome.
- o The priorities in the department shift continuously.
- o Poor productivity.
- o Planning staff's position in some issues is not well argued before the Planning Commission and City Council, indicating maybe the need for strong training in the department.



## II. HOW SHOULD THE NEW PLANNING DIRECTOR BE?

Besides all the necessary professional qualifications and experience, the new director should:

- o Be a strong leader--be able to say no when necessary.
- o Be charismatic-- strong personality.
- o Be a good salesman.
- o Be able to explain complex issues in simple terms (what a plan can do or not do; avoid using Planning lingo).
- o Be able to communicate with staff.
- o Be a good politician in order to build support and constituency by working closely with elected and appointed officials, citizenry and other departments of the City.
- o Be innovative, command respect, have a concern for quality; but also be pragmatic, and decisive.
- o Be able to bring issues that are city-wide in nature and not normally brought up by anybody else (e.g., social issues, issues of the "have nots").
- o Be a visionary that will have a clear notion of where the City is going; be able to unify staff under common purpose and vision for the city.
- o Be able to establish a constituency (from citizens, developers, and groups such as "Chamber of Commerce" type) in order to acquire the political power necessary to pursue the planning vision for the city.

### III. TEAM MANAGEMENT

How to improve the department will depend very heavily not only on its leader, or director, but also on the management team needed to lead the staff. This should be accomplished by:

- o Establishing a team that will function as a collegiate system, but with a clear dean that will:
  - have a sense of priority.
  - shift, if needed, resources within the department.
  - have a clear sense of direction for the department.
- o Establishing a strong Deputy Director position responsible for overall city Planning Department Administration, thus freeing more time for the director to exercise his/her overall leadership/public relations role.



#### IV. ORIENTATION OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Department needs to be service-oriented within the city government. This is important because there is an increased interest in planning issues that will result in a "political immediacy."

- o The service-oriented approach will be required not only in working with the Mayor, Council and Planning Commission but with other agencies (e.g., CRA and Building & Safety). This could be accomplished by defining criteria for city-wide basis relationships with these other agencies (e.g., Planning Department needs to establish its value in the redevelopment process, thus a need for a clear definition of roles between the Planning Department and CRA).
- o This approach will require development of tools that are transferable, to be used from one specific area to other areas of the city, or city-wide.
- o This approach will require streamlined procedures and a level of participation by the department to be pre-established with other agencies and units of government at a policy level.

V. HOW THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT SHOULD HANDLE POLITICALLY  
CONFLICTING PRIORITIES AND DECISIONS

Needs to establish a more structured and deliberate  
relationship with:

o City Council

Besides working with the Planning and Land Use Committee of the Council, there has to be a system established by which priorities will be obtained from the Council and Council Staff through regular briefing sessions. This will avoid the perception that the Planning Department is playing catch-up with Council demands; and that the department is counting votes, or making recommendations, taking into account political pressures.

o Mayor

Department needs to establish more effectively a constituency for projects, so that the Mayor, knowing that he will have support for his position in those issues, can use his veto power more effectively in backing the Planning Department's recommendations.

o Planning Commission

Establish a structure by which clear policies will be set by the Commission on a regular basis.

o Across Departments

Need to establish a clear mechanism or position in the Mayor's office to coordinate work of related departments which are related (e.g., Planning, Public Works, Transportation, Building & Safety, Housing).

o Constituency

Need to establish a clear constituency for the Planning Department from the following groups:

- Citizens to be supported by, and support, the planning program
- Developers
- Editorial Board and newspapers
- Chamber of Commerce and other special interest groups



# Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development

CITY HALL 125 NORTH MID AMERICA MALL MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38103-2084 (901) 570-1100

March 21, 1991

Mr. Paul Zucker, AICP  
President, Zucker Systems  
9909 Huennekens Street  
San Diego, CA 92121-2928

Re: Recommendations on Los Angeles Planning Department

Dear Mr. Zucker:

The following are recommendations on the Los Angeles Planning Department as a result of the Peer Review.

1. The Los Angeles City Planning Department appears to be suffering from absence of department leadership and subsequent political tampering, possibly in response, in order to have some planning activity taking place. The Department desperately needs decision-making and continuity.
2. Hire a Director with strong leadership skills:
  - Ability to communicate ideas
  - Credibility with the City Council
  - Aggressive advocate for planning, particularly long-range community wide planning
  - Ability to develop a constituency of the Council, citizenry, other departments, etc.
3. Department is reacting to requests only. The new Director needs to take charge setting their own agenda, looking at community wide issues, and providing service and support to all segments of the community. Currently are not serving older, lower income neighborhoods.
4. Technology was the focus of my review. The amount of data and paper requiring processing demands computerization. If you are going to streamline planning processes, computerization should eliminate duplication and reduce time for processing.

Recommendations in the technology area are divided into short and long range:

- a. Short Range has only one main strategy. It is the quickest, cheapest and provides computer capability for the department as a whole.

- (1) Provide Access to Computer Processing toward a goal of placing a computer on every staff members desk.

Professional Planners would write their plans on line -  
Reduces cumbersome process of clerical input, printing, revision cycles.

Clerical would format planners work for final document.

Graphics should have desktop publishing and other computer graphic aids, increases dramatically in-house capability. Create documents easier to read, inexpensive to produce.

- (2) Decentralize Word Processing Center It is a cumbersome, and usually unresponsive way to complete projects. Placing these staff and computers in Divisions, this function is closer to the work and the clerical staff are made a part of the professional staff. Could make use of downtime with other tasks.
- (3) Computer Training is a must for these recommendations as you want staff to use resources as soon as possible.

b. Longer Term Thoughts

- (1) Establishing a parcel base GIS is an essential tool for planning analysis. However, current systems are the result of many different projects, and appears to suffer from this piecemeal approach.

I believe you need to step back from existing systems and use a multi-departmental approach. Engineering, Building and Safety and Planning use much the same data and are all involved in the development process. You can accomplish more as a group than individually. This should be done in coordination with the Department of Information Services so that it can be a part of GIMS but also more importantly, so that they will support and maintain the system. Why spend Planning resources on Computer Programmers and technicians. In Memphis, we are working with the Utility Company and a number of other departments want to link on once the system is complete. Could be a revenue producing item.



- (2) All routine processes should be automated. First is permit process. This is not a tracking system where additional work is required, but would serve the department by reducing staff time processing. All routine reports should be set up to be automatically produced.
- (3) Cultivate technology leadership. People who stay abreast of new technology and existing system applications, commonly known as computer buffs or hobbyists - it is those persons who are curious about the system who invent new process short cuts or time saving ideas.

I hope that these recommendations and thoughts are helpful to the City of Los Angeles in its desire to improve the productivity and professional outlook of the City Planning Department. If you or city representatives would like to discuss any of these remarks, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

  
Cynthia A. Buchanan

as



GARY J. SCHOENNAUER  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

April 9, 1991

Mr. Paul C. Zucker, AICP  
President  
Zucker Systems  
9909 Huennekens Street, Suite 120  
San Diego, CA 92121-2928

Dear Paul:

As a followup to our Peer Review session in Los Angeles, the following are observations and comments:

- o Strong leadership at the top and with top management in the department is critical in moving this large organization in the right direction.
- o A major outreach effort needs to occur with the city council offices, especially the council assistants to buy into the planning program up front. It is important to convince the council offices and their assistants the need to work with the director and top management in order to assure their needs are met.
- o It is necessary to immediately clear out the backlog of project cases and environmental impact reports. This is a clear area where management must take a much more direct role in ensuring that the backlog is handled expeditiously. It may require that management get directly in charge and make the "judgment calls" required to move the process along.
- o There seems to be support from the city council offices and a recognition of the need for an improved planning process. From all that I have been able to gather, the councilmembers are in trouble throughout the city with their constituents due to poor planning and antiquated planning tools in Los Angeles (it will be interesting to see the outcome of the elections today).
- o It is important that the councilmembers, the mayor, and the planning director make certain that council's planning deputies are not playing games in order to maintain their own power base within individual council districts and that they would in fact buy into real planning process improvements. This may mean they give up some power to a stronger director and department.



April 9, 1991

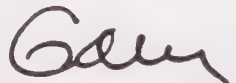
- o Structural and institutional change should be considered: streamlining the administration of the permit and hearing process by considering Charter and/or other changes to rid the City of the hearing examiners and zoning administrators by consolidating the responsibility and control in the director's office and the deputies. These are critical changes in structure if the department is to improve its efficiency and productivity.
- o The central permit processing center is the most unfriendly-to-customers environment I have ever seen. It reminds me of an old Department of Motor Vehicles facility. Anyone dealing with the City of Los Angeles being exposed to this must think the entire organization is just one huge bureaucracy. Major changes in the design and function of this area need to be considered.

These are general observations and comments. I would be happy to follow up with you on any of these or would be pleased to followup with you on any questions you may have when you wrap up your study.

The next director will have a major challenge and will require an exceptionally strong management team, but will have to spend the majority of his or her time in outreach efforts with the industry, community, and mayor and city council offices.

Good luck!

Sincerely,



Gary J. Schoennauer  
Director of Planning

jb

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OLIVER E. BYRUM, DIRECTOR

minneapolis  
city of lakes

April 29, 1991

Paul Zucker, President  
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San Diego, CA 92121-2928

Dear Paul:

First I want to thank you, Melanie Fallon and everyone else for the opportunity to participate on the peer review panel. It was truly a good time socially, professionally and intellectually.

I am pleased that the city staff and official reaction has been so positive, particularly that staff who had thought it was a bad idea became supportive after our work was completed.

My comments essentially rerun my presentation at the March 5 morning meeting.

Los Angeles represents an incredibly difficult and complex challenge to the planning profession. For planning to succeed in this situation requires an extremely strategic and wise approach. An effective regional planning process is essential. It strikes me that the most logical planning units are the household, the neighborhood and the metropolitan area. All other geographic and informational scales are dealing with a somewhat arbitrary but obviously real set of circumstances. This department is right in the middle of all that.

I was very impressed by the staff. I spoke to people at almost all levels within the staff. There is a lot of very professional work going on. The talent is there to do a great deal.



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In my judgement the most important issues are establishing strong management leadership and depoliticizing the department. Political reactiveness seems to go quite deeply into the department. It effects day-to-day work program, work quality and morale. The department needs a strong management team that sees one of its major roles as the buffering of the rest of the staff from the vicissitudes of the political process. Planning should be responsive but not subservient to politics. Solving this problem is a challenge not only for the departmental management but must be also endorsed and respected by the political leadership of the city.

It seemed important to me that the director decision be made soon in order to eliminate uncertainties. The department needs to have the leadership, continuity and stability in place in order to get on with its mission. If it were up to me, I would simply make Melanie Fallon director and get on with it. This could happen quickly and avoid the trauma of yet another change in leadership.

Some very effective management training and team building seem appropriate. Managing a department this size in a city this complex and in such a difficult political environment is as difficult as any management challenge in the largest corporations. While knowledge of the city and of city planning is of first importance, strong management skill is also required of everyone on the management team.

It seemed that a new effort to set priorities among the management team and elected officials was underway. I applaud that. In my judgement too much of the work program was reactive to individual council member request. I heard Bob Sutton talk about learning to say no to council members and meaning it when saying yes. That is exactly what is needed.

The communications with other departments seemed weak. In a white hot political environment, our instinct is to communicate upward with the political powers that be. This comes at the expense of communicating with our management peers in other departments. The system offers little reward for such horizontal communication. We have a similar situation in our city hall. However, forging working relationships with the most similar functions such as community development, public works and information systems is essential. Perhaps building these relationships could be assigned to management team members. Both internal and external communications is necessary for building a constituency for planning.

Again, I would hope the department could have a more proactive work program that is more department directed and less politically active. I believe a successful planning department is one that is involved in, expert in, and influencing the outcome of those issues most critical to the future well being of the city.

Most of the rest of my comments have to do with the work program.

The balanced growth initiative is a good one. I think it offers a real opportunity to set vision and provide common direction for transportation planning, air quality planning, development planning and hopefully social issues planning. It is, however, very technically and politically difficult. I would strongly urge that the management team have a contingency process in mind for

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achieving the goals of the balanced growth initiative in case the technical or political processes fail you.

I believe a department this size needs a much stronger applied research and analysis capability. This should include demographics, housing, economic and human development data and analysis. One purpose of this is to become respected as a source of good information. Contrary to conventional wisdom, politicians do respect and like information if it is relevant and presented well and briefly. Furthermore, this information is necessary because a successful planning department must understand how the city is changing, which issues are most likely to effect the future well-being of the city, and have an accurate policy sense of how to deal with those issues. This is the heart of what a planning department is about.

I believe that if planning is to set direction for a city it must be involved in at least development regulation, capital programming and coordinating redevelopment. It may be the case that the Los Angeles department is putting a disproportionate amount of resources into the development regulation leg of that triad. In any case, a much stronger role is needed in capital programming and redevelopment. I would suggest that the department and the development agency prepare jointly a redevelopment policy that addresses where redevelopment will be undertaken, the general nature of the redevelopment in those places, and project specific guidelines to direct implementation. I would also suggest that the city needs a coordinated capital programming process with the planning department in a leadership role, perhaps shared with the finance and budgeting departments.

The city needs a downtown plan. The planning department should go ahead and do this. It should cover development, design, transportation, parking, transit, air quality and other issues. The major actors should be the planning department and the downtown business groups, with participation by public works and development departments if they are willing.

Like almost every other central city, your future is tied to the well being of your residents. I believe central cities' planning must devote much more time and insight to the fundamental issues of poverty, race, education and employment. A key issue in neighborhood planning is how well our the people doing in this neighborhood. Are kids growing up here likely to do well? If not, why not? This type of planning will probably lead to more involvement with basic city services and human services than planners are accustomed. However, this is necessary if the planning department wants to influence the issues that most effect the future well being of the city.

There are other issues that are involved, of course, but others covered them very well.

I see the national advertising has begun for the new director. I will be interested in how this turns out. There certainly would be some promising candidates among the existing staff, including, of course, the acting director.

You asked about our program. The population of Minneapolis is 368,000. Our budget is \$2.5 million per year. We have 40 employees. We are not directly responsible for the permitting function. Attached is a summary of our 1991



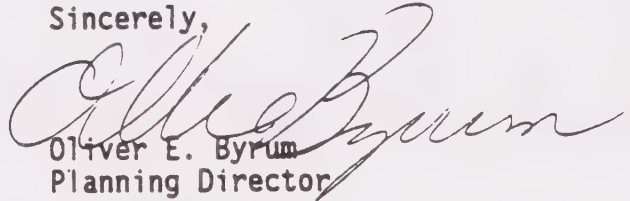
Paul Zucker  
Page 4.

April 29, 1991

budget. When I look at these numbers I am a little surprised that I have anything to say about Los Angeles, given the difference in size and complexity, but in the final analysis planning is a fairly ego driven activity and mine is well and active.

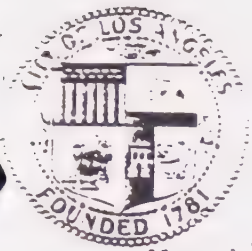
Thank you for the opportunity and the patience of you and city staff in working with us. I appreciate your skill in organizing all of this.

Sincerely,



Oliver E. Byrum  
Planning Director

OEB:jb  
OL:lapd



# Los Angeles City Planning Department

Room 561 City Hall



March 14, 1991

TO: Those Interested

FROM: Melanie S. Fallon, Director of Planning

SUBJECT: MY NOTES FROM PEER REVIEW ON DEPARTMENT ISSUES -  
PLANNING DIRECTORS - MARCH 5, 1991

I. MANAGEMENT - by Ollie Byrun (Minneapolis)

- 1) Most difficult problem for Department of City Planning is City Council. Management must be responsible to City Council but not subservient. Director should be strong with politicians.
- 2) Make Director decision soon.
- 3) Managers need more management training - learn how to say no better.
- 4) Do effective priority setting with staff and City Council. Department of City Planning needs to be frank with politicians.
- 5) Need better communication between departments and building a constituency from public.
- 6) Department needs a more proactive Department Work Program which we develop - not so much influence by City Council.
- 7) Like Balanced Growth Element initiative - a real opportunity to set some vision - will be a tough challenge.
- 8) Department of City Planning needs a much stronger Research and Analysis Section (demographers, economists, etc.).
- 9) Planning needs to give more direction to Redevelopment process/policy, regulatory process, and capital improvement process.
- 10) Department needs to get on with a Downtown Plan.
- 11) Main planning problem facing City are people problems - Department needs to become more social planning oriented.



II. CITYWIDE VS. NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES - By Gary Schoenhauer (San Jose)

- 1) Balanced Growth Plan is first opportunity in 20 years to help establish City's vision for future. A few cautions:
  - . needs to be understandable and real
  - . be careful of modelling being too technical
  - . 2-3 City Council members should be actively involved in process right at beginning so that they can help sell it
  - . budget may not be realistic enough
- 2) Where do community plans fit in? Their view is that Citywide framework should be completed first and land use element done second.
- 3) Look at reducing number of community plans--more in direction of doing a Citywide Land Use Element (San Jose has one Land Use Element for entire City).
- 4) Specific Plans - be careful about doing these - they need to be consistent with good Citywide policy -- too cumbersome - are being used to replace outdated zoning and community plans.
- 5) Look at redoing Zoning Code as solution - not Specific Plans.
- 6) Design Review Boards will create chaos! include design standards in code, let Planning Director do - not Design Review Boards.

III. DEVELOPMENT PROCESSING - by Bob Paternoster (Long Beach)

- 1) Our processes are too isolated - not customer service oriented.
- 2) Zoning Administration and Hearing Examiners are proud of what they are doing and do it well.
- 3) Need better managers, maybe not, more staff.
- 4) Construction Services Counter is not service oriented:
  - . needs a receptionist
  - . needs one single manager
  - . process should be computerized
- 5) Need automated permitting system. (As a by-product, will collect data for management reports and improve productivity.)
- 6) Each development project, regardless of how many processes/approvals, needs one planner assigned.
- 7) Fix target dates for completion of each discretionary process - hold planners to date.
- 8) Take shortcuts in development processing - some cases don't need so much analysis.
- 9) Zoning Administrators' reports don't need such great detail, don't take so much time hand-holding.
- 10) Set up self-sustaining fee system - like an enterprise fund.
- 11) Hearing Examiners need more policy direction, especially from Citywide and Neighborhood Planning Divisions.
- 12) Experiment with decentralization - Zoning Administration and Neighborhood Planning Divisions should be decentralized.
- 13) PLM should report to City Council PLM recommendation and City Planning Commission recommendation.
- 14) PLM should report to City Council the full cost of implementing plans/ordinances.



#### IV. REDEVELOPMENT by Con Howe (New York City)

- 1) Redevelopment/planning issues not our burning issue.
- 2) It is an opportune time to rethink roles between Community Redevelopment Agency and Department of City Planning.
- 3) Roles between Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and Department of City Planning need to be clearer.
  - . Department of City Planning should plan.
  - . Community Redevelopment Agency should implement.
  - . Planning should lay out overall redevelopment direction and agenda - i.d. neighborhoods where needed with input by CRA and Council offices.
  - . Work through a compromise work plan for CRA/DCP to work together to create redevelopment plans.
  - . CRA should implement.

#### BIG CITY ISSUES

- 1) New York City and Los Angeles departments similar size and activities. These two departments need to focus on how to achieve:
  - . citywide planning
  - . neighborhood planning
  - . case processing

When applicant or neighborhood-citizen group comes into contact with people that is key.

- 2) Up to top management to help sort out neighborhood issues, tailor solutions to work for all neighborhoods, don't reinvent the wheel each time. Train staff to know how to use approved tools to get quick plans out. Be realistic about what can be accomplished. Use constituents to help do field work.
- 3) Share with City Council about how to do these neighborhood issues.

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Build constituency for planning

- . public
- . CRA
- . media

People need to be able to say Department of City Planning helped me and got my project/plan done!

V. TECHNOLOGY - by Cynthia Buchanan (Memphis)

- 1) If we only do one thing - get everyone a personal computer! Buy and train staff to use. One PC on everyone's desk -- can do own analysis.
- 2) Word Processing Center - decentralize word processing down to Divisions. Will get clerical and computers into each division.
- 3) Train staff first before computers arrive.
- 4) Establish parcel level GIS -- needs rethought as to what we need and then work with Building & Safety, Board of Public Works, Department of Transportation and Information Services Department to do cooperatively.
- 5) Work with Information Services Department to get us software and maintenance.
- 6) Automate all processes - start with development processing.
- 7) Cultivate technology leadership in Department.

- 
- 8) Overall Planning Department needs to serve all aspects of community.
- 

- 9) Credibility - need to get newspapers to work with us.



VI. POLITICAL/PROFESSIONAL ISSUES by Sergio Rodriguez (Miami)

Looked at fine line between professional judgment and political influence.

- 1) Leadership void in Department for a long time. Staff good and hardworking - well-meaning, but problems exist:
  - . too beureaucratic
  - . don't meet deadlines
  - . too many backlogs
  - . staff is demoralized by political process
- 2) Planning has been too passive in redevelopment and major development projects.
- 3) Communication needs to be approved.
- 4) Speed up work - make work understandable/reachable.
- 5) Poor productivity and staff presentations - train staff better.
- 6) Department of City Planning needs leadership from Director and top management.
- 7) Department of City Planning should be more service-oriented.
- 8) Improve relations with other agencies - est. role Department can play with other departments.
- 9) To Have More Effective Department of City Planning
  - . Department needs more regular time with City Council to ascertain policies/direction.
  - . Mayor should be willing to use veto powers to achieve Citywide planning goals.
  - . Work with editorial board of newspaper.
- 10) New Planning Director Needs
  - . to be strong - be able to say no
  - . charasmatic personality
  - . explain complex issues in simple terms
  - . be good salesperson
  - . communicate with staff
  - . be good politician
  - . innovative, decisive, pragmatic
  - . be able to bring forward Citywide issues
  - . needs to be a visionary - know where City is going to communicate that





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